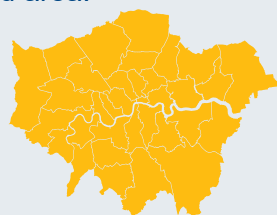


Evaluation of London Multiply: key findings

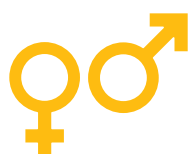
London had the largest number of enrolments for any devolved area.

59,000 enrolments*



24% of national enrolments

Over 40,000 Londoners took part in London Multiply¹. Of these:



72% of learners were female

28% of learners were male

68% of learners were aged 24-49

22% of learners were aged 50+



71% of learners were from an ethnic minority background

29% of learners were white

14% considered themselves to have a learning difference or health condition²



67% of providers used new, innovative approaches to deliver London Multiply including:

- embedding numeracy into other courses
- delivering provision in the community
- offering a wider range non-substantive provision

97% of learners said their experience of London Multiply was positive

This was attributed to engaging tutors, opportunities to socialise with other learners, and the accessible nature of provision.



65% of providers experienced challenges recruiting and upskilling staff:

Solutions to overcome challenges included:

- explaining the distinction between London Multiply and existing numeracy learning to staff
- fostering a collaborative, supportive culture around numeracy within the workforce
- working with tutors to identify where numeracy already existed in their courses



94% of providers developed existing, or established new relationships with local organisations

Providers advertised their provision in a range of ways. Most commonly:



94% advertised to existing learners

90% used leaflets and brochures



88% worked with community organisations

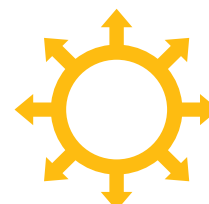
London Multiply supported a range of outcomes for learners. In particular:

66% reported increased confidence, particularly around using numbers



49% reported an increased ability to complete tasks or achieve goals that involve using numbers/numeracy

45% moved onto other Adult Skills Fund courses



Overview of London Multiply

Multiply was a three-year adult learning programme launched in 2022 that aimed to increase functional numeracy levels within the adult population across the UK. The programme was designed to increase confidence with numbers, help people manage their money and support parents with their own progression and with their children's education.

The Greater London Authority's (GLA) allocation (£41m, the largest of any area in England) was distributed amongst 56 providers, all of which were already delivering Adult Skills Fund (formerly Adult Education Budget³) provision. Between September 2022 and January 2025 over 59,000 Londoners enrolled on London Multiply courses, accounting for 24% of Multiply enrolments nationally.¹

The Department for Education outlined three key target groups for Multiply provision: parents, care leavers and people with experience of the criminal justice system. To increase focus on engaging underserved groups and those less likely to take part in adult education, London Multiply identified additional target groups. These included: learners for whom English is not their first language, learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities, low wage earners and those most likely to be impacted by the rising cost of living.

Research aims

IES' evaluation of London Multiply explored the extent to which the programme achieved its aim of improving adult numeracy across the city. This summary captures key learning and recommendations that emerged from the evaluation.

Key findings

Experiences of delivery and engaging in London Multiply

Two-thirds (67%) of providers used new, innovative approaches to deliver London Multiply provision. Providers commended the freedom London Multiply gave them to trial new approaches. This enabled them to identify important adaptations to their provision to deliver accessible, engaging numeracy provision. Key adaptations included:

- embedding numeracy in other skills courses;
- delivering provision in community settings; and
- offering a wider range of non-substantive provision (i.e. activities or short courses lasting up to two hours).

Two-thirds (65%) of providers experienced difficulties recruiting and/or upskilling staff to deliver provision. This was a result of both an existing shortage of maths teachers⁴ and negative perceptions of numeracy amongst staff. To overcome this, some providers used hourly paid lecturers. Others offered numeracy refresher sessions delivered by maths tutors to build their existing workforces' confidence.

Community organisations played a key role in delivery by providing venues for community-based provision and working closely with providers to tailor provision to the needs of specific communities. Additionally, **employers were able to identify new talent pipelines** and establish partnerships with providers to create access to employment for those on relevant courses.

Despite largely positive feedback, providers, community partners and employers shared a common view that **developing and maintaining partnerships was time and resource intensive** and were unsure how feasible this would be after the end of the programme. Providers reported **particular challenges in engaging employers**, owed to employers not seeing the benefit of releasing staff for training, or having limited resource to research the initiative.

Providers commended the GLA's regular communication through fortnightly bulletins, a dedicated single point of contact and quarterly in-person roundtables. These were viewed as particularly useful for sharing learning and good practice.

Almost all (97%) **learners surveyed said their experience of taking part in London Multiply was positive**. This was largely attributed to:

- engaging tutors;
- opportunities to socialise with other learners; and
- the tailored, accessible nature of provision.

Additional feedback from learners indicated that enrolment processes were generally straightforward, although this was not always the case.

Outreach and engagement

London Multiply was **successful in engaging a diverse range of learners**. Notably, GLA analysis of Individualised Learner Record data showed that:

- around three-quarters of learners (72%) were female;
- two-thirds of learners (68%) were aged 24-49; and
- over one in ten of learners (14%) considered themselves to have a learning difficulty, disability and/or health problem.

Working in partnership with community organisations was viewed to be the most effective approach to engaging Londoners. They were able to leverage trust within the communities they support to encourage learners to take part in London Multiply. This was particularly effective for engaging Londoners from London Multiply target groups and underserved communities. In the survey, **word of mouth was the most common way learners found out about their course**, reported by one-third of learners (34%).

Learners gave a variety of reasons for enrolling onto courses, often reflecting individuals' personal circumstances. Most frequently, **learners hoped to improve their numeracy skills, gain confidence using numbers, and learn a new skill**.

Learners also highlighted **key drivers for their sustained engagement** in provision. These largely reflected adaptations providers made to provision and included:

- shorter courses;
- courses relevant to their everyday life; and
- interventions tailored to their individual circumstances.

Learner outcomes

London Multiply has been able to support learners to achieve **a range of outcomes** including:

- **greater confidence** using numbers, managing money, and in personal abilities to succeed in education and navigate everyday life;
- new **social and support networks**, developing individuals' social integration;
- progression into learning beyond London Multiply, both maths and non-maths focused. GLA analysis of Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data indicated that **45% of learners progressed onto other ASF provision** within 180 days of taking part in Multiply provision¹; and
- **progression into and within employment**. This included important skills surrounding entry to employment such as travel planning, time management, and healthy routines.

Recommendations

Recommendations for the GLA:

- Establish mechanisms (or enhance existing mechanisms) to **facilitate relationships between providers, community organisations and employers** and evaluate their effectiveness.
- Consider how the delivery of bespoke essential numeracy skills courses for roles in key London sectors can be incentivised to support recruitment.
- **Explore how strategies for engaging employers in adult learning could be improved**. This could include ensuring employers have a single, trusted point of contact about all GLA skills initiatives including, for example, adult education opportunities, apprenticeships and the Good Work standard. This would help to build trust and confidence in providers among employers.
- **Identify how forums similar to the London Multiply roundtables can be replicated** more widely to support the design and delivery of other ASF provision and programmes. There would be value in these sessions being in-person to help maintain the engagement and commitment that has been secured during Multiply.
- **Assess the feasibility of expanding free continuing professional development for the Further Education workforce** to include courses that can build confidence within the workforce to deliver essential skills provision.

Recommendations for providers:

- With support from the GLA, **work to ensure non-substantive, non-accredited provision remains available beyond London Multiply**. This includes taster sessions and short workshops that provide entry routes to adult learning.
- **Continue to embed numeracy and other essential skills provision into wider provision** such as English for Speakers of Other Languages and recreational learning, as well as courses closely linked to employment opportunities, such as health and social care.
- Identify how careers information, advice and guidance can be embedded into other ASF courses to capitalise on the positive shift in confidence and attitude to employment that London Multiply facilitated.
- Providers should **prioritise engaging with community organisations** in order to promote adult education opportunities and create new referral and progression pathways for learners from underserved communities.
- Prioritise having up-to-date, accessible enrolment and course information online.
- **Ensure a greater mix of on-site and online provision** in order to boost accessibility of provision for underserved communities and key target groups.

Footnotes:

¹ Between August 2022 and January 2025; GLA analysis of ILR data ([DfE, FE and Skills, 2024](#)).

² Recorded through the ILR as ‘Learner considers themselves to have a health condition and/or disability and/or learning difficulty.’

³ The Adult Education Budget became the Adult Skills Fund in August 2024. The evaluation explored experiences during both funding periods, however, refers to this consistently as the Adult Skills Fund throughout the report.

⁴ [How do shortages of maths teachers affect the within-school allocation of maths teachers to pupils? | Nuffield Foundation](#)