

Guidance for employers accessing the Workforce Development Fund (WDF)

What is the Workforce Development Fund (WDF)?

The Workforce Development Fund (WDF) for 2017-18 is a retrospective funding stream from the Department of Health disseminated by Skills for Care. This means that an employer must have directly incurred costs for the qualifications, units or learning programmes undertaken by their staff before a claim is made through WDF. The fund focuses on the achievement of qualifications, QCF units and learning programmes and supports the ongoing professional development of staff across the adult social care sector in England. 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+ 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 adult social care employers in England.

The application process

Organisations and partnership leads submitted funding applications to Skills for Care. Funding allocations were agreed and grants were awarded to successful applicants in April 2017.

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.
2. Comply with NMDS-SC requirements or be prepared to meet these prior to claiming funding. We have also developed a guidance document – NMDS-SC completion guidance.
3. Have employees who are completing eligible QCF units, RQF qualifications or non-accredited learning programmes against which you want to claim funding, see the acceptable units list.

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 from April 2017. From the [Accessing WDF via 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, please follow this [link](#) and use the information, guidance and forms which are available here.

How do I join a partnership?

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

Once you are aware of the criteria you need to complete a member's declaration form and submit it to the grant holder. Some grant holders may ask for additional information to support your application.

How do I comply with the NMDS-SC requirements?

Read the [NMDS-SC completion guidance](#).

For an establishment to meet the NMDS-SC requirements for the Workforce Development Fund in 2017-18, the following three things must be completed:

1. An establishment which has completed an NMDS-SC organisational record before 1 April 2017 must fully update its organisational data.
2. The establishment must fully complete individual NMDS-SC worker records for a minimum of 90% of its total workforce (this includes any staff who are not care-providing).
3. Individual records for workers completed before 1 April 2017 which are included in the 90% calculation must be both fully completed and updated.

Once the above requirements have been met, an establishment will be able to claim WDF until 31 March 2018. An establishment's NMDS-SC 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 NMDS-SC will be updated. Failure to do so could affect your ability to claim funding.

How will I know when I have met the NMDS-SC requirements for WDF?

Log into your NMDS-SC account and from the left hand menu click on reports. Choose 'My WDF NMDS-SC requirements report'. This will tell you whether your establishment is 'eligible' or 'not eligible' in terms of meeting the NMDS-SC requirements for WDF. Where an establishment is not eligible, this report will show whether this is due to the establishment data or the worker data. You can then run the 'My establishment report'

and/or 'My worker list' to identify gaps in the data. As these are live reports, you can update your NMDS-SC information and rerun the reports to get an updated position.

Parent establishments can run 'My WDF NMDS-SC requirements parent report'. This will show which of your subsidiaries are 'eligible' or 'not eligible' in terms of meeting the NMDS-SC requirements for WDF. If you cannot see data relating to your subsidiaries via this report, this will be because of the data sharing permissions set by the subsidiary, which will have been set so that data is not shared with the parent account.

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: 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 it would not be appropriate to allow public money 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: Access funding on a 1:9 ratio from an alternative source of funding. 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 £300 on a standard capped at £3,000) can be factored into the total cost of training. The 90% from the government (up to £2,700 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 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.

If you are claiming through a WDF partnership you must complete a Workforce Development Fund Employer Claim Submission Form, or equivalent supplied by your partnership, and send it to the grant holder with all of your unit summary sheets or certificates.

QCF units - the learning provider must complete a qualification unit summary sheet in full or you can use a copy of the learner's certificate. Skills for Care has a template unit summary sheet that can be used, or you may submit an alternative version supplied by your learning provider, as long as it captures these items:

- Candidate name
- Candidate registration number
- Unique learner number
- Name of Awarding Organisation
- Name of Learning Provider or Centre number
- Unit code as per the acceptable units list
- Unit title
- **Internal Verifier date**
- **Internal Verifier signature**

Has to be dated between 1 January 2017 and 31 March 2018
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It is important to note that a maximum of 60 credits per learner can be claimed in any financial year so it is strongly recommended that you secure written agreement from the learning provider at the outset that fully completed unit summary sheets will be provided free of charge on a regular basis to enable WDF to be claimed. The financial year for 2017/18 is 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

In lieu of a unit summary sheet or learning provider equivalent, we will accept a copy of the learner's certificate, with a summary of units completed.

Copies of certificates being used as evidence must contain the following information:

- Candidate name
- Candidate registration number
- Unique learner number
- Our unit code as per the acceptable units list (our unit codes will need to be written on, if the awarding organisation uses different codes)
- Name of units completed
- The date of issue of the certificate must fall within our advertised dates for the funding year, so 1 January 2017 – 31 March 2018 for 17/18.
- Name of Awarding Organisation
- Name of Learning Provider or centre number

RQF qualifications - a copy of the learner's certificate must be submitted which contains the following information:

- Candidate name
- Candidate registration number
- Name of qualification
- Our code as per the acceptable units list (our code will need to be written on, if the awarding organisation uses a different code)
- The date of issue of the certificate must fall within our advertised dates for the funding year, so 1 January 2017 – 31 March 2018 for 17/18.
- Name of Awarding Organisation (this must be [an awarding organisation that is advertised as approved by Skills for Care to offer the qualification](#))
- Name of Learning Provider or centre number

Non-accredited learning programmes - 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 acceptable units list (our code will need to be written on, if the learning provider uses a different code)
- The date of issue of the certificate must fall within our advertised dates for the funding year, so 1 January 2017 – 31 March 2018 for 17/18.
- Name of endorsed learning provider

Each WDF grant contains 5 milestones which are as follows:

30 June 2017

29 September 2017

30 November 2017

31 January 2018

30 March 2018

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 QCF units, RQF qualifications and non-accredited learning programmes, 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 have to pay the funding directly to their members and cannot pay the WDF to a third party such as a learning provider under any circumstances.

How does the process of claiming WDF differ for large national organisations who claim funds directly from Skills for Care?

- Skills for Care has contracted directly with a number of large national organisations. These organisations need to submit an organisation declaration form to Skills for Care which details the NMDS-SC id, name and address for all subsidiaries for which WDF will be accessed and CQC provider and location ids if applicable.
- The NMDS-SC requirements must be met as detailed above.
- Completed unit summary sheets or equivalent, or a copy of a learner's certificate, must be submitted to the lead contact within your organisation to enable them to submit a claim for funding.

Who can help me?

- For queries relating to claiming the Workforce Development Fund please contact your grant holder.
- 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 NMDS-SC queries please contact the NMDS-SC Support Service on 0845 873 0129 or nmds-support@skillsforcare.org.uk

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