

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for large national organisation grant holders

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## 1. General

### What is the Workforce Development Fund?

The Workforce Development Fund (WDF) is a funding opportunity for adult social care employers in England. It's a finite pot of money which allows you to reclaim some of the costs incurred developing your paid workforce.

WDF is supported by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) who enable the funding to be disbursed to adult social care employers by Skills for Care.

### What will WDF fund?

The WDF will fund a range of qualifications and apprenticeships that started on or before 31 March 2024.

- Skills for Care endorsed, promotes and in many cases has been involved in developing
- are named on this [list](#)

Qualifications and apprenticeship standards certificates must have a date of issue between 1 January 2024 and 31 March 2025.

### Who can claim WDF?

All organisations that provide an adult social care service and directly employ paid care staff in England can claim the fund. This includes:

- hospices whose adult social care workers are not NHS funded;
- workers recruited from abroad and those who are working on a Health and Social Care Visa.

The fund cannot be used to develop volunteers.

### What is the maximum funding that can be claimed for each learner in 2024-25?

A maximum of £2,035 can be claimed per learner per funding year. It is possible to claim funding to support more than one qualification apprenticeship per learner up to the limit of £2,035.

### Why has WDF been limited to claiming a maximum of £2,035 per learner per financial year?

Skills for Care wants to expand the reach of WDF to ensure that as many employers and their employees as possible within the adult social care sector can benefit from

the fund.

**Will the WDF fund the Care Certificate, Food Hygiene, First Aid, Moving and Assisting and other induction and refresher courses?**

No. The fund is to support the continuing professional development of staff and will not fund induction or mandatory training.

**Why can I only claim funding for RQF diplomas that have been approved by Skills for Care?**

Skills for Care has developed qualification specifications in conjunction with sector representatives to outline the mandatory content of these qualifications and will approve qualifications developed to these specifications. Any approved qualifications will show the qualification approved by Skills for Care logo. We will maintain a list of approved qualifications on [our website](#) as they become available. Funding is assigned to these qualifications because we are confident that they meet sector need.

## **2. Grant requirements**

**What are the grant requirements and milestones?**

The grant milestones are set out in your grant award letter and are also detailed on the information for large national organisations page of our website.

Our disbursement team must receive claims no later than the dates specified and must receive final claims no later than 31 March 2025. If you are experiencing any difficulties in achieving this, this must be put in writing to your Disbursements Assistant or lead contact at the earliest opportunity.

**If I have any problems or questions regarding my grant letter, who should I contact?**

Contact your Disbursements Assistant responsible for your grant. They are identified on all correspondence.

**Can I have multiple contacts for my WDF grant and what should I do if these change during the period of the grant award?**

Skills for Care can only discuss this grant with the designated lead contact and primary contact. You can have one lead contact and one primary contact for your

grant.

If these change during the funding year, you need to supply updated contact details to your Disbursements Assistant and lead contact.

### **Do I need to keep a copy of any of the WDF documentation?**

You are required to retain all supporting documentation in relation to WDF funding claims in accordance with the grant letter. You are required to keep copies of documents for six years.

### **How do I know if a subsidiary is eligible for WDF?**

The funding claim form is the most accurate way of checking eligibility.

Only those subsidiaries showing on the organisation drop down list on the first tab of the funding claim form are eligible for funding.

Skills for Care checks eligibility on a weekly basis. Newly eligible workplaces are added to the appropriate claim form and an updated claim form is issued where required.

### **What do I do if I have issues with my learning provider?**

Learning providers are chosen by you. Skills for Care recommends that you have a written agreement with your learning provider when commissioning learning and development.

If you are unhappy with a learning provider, you should consider alternative providers. Any issues between you and your learning provider should be resolved directly between the parties involved.

You can use Skills for Care's [endorsed provider directory](#) to search for high quality learning providers.

### **A learning provider has offered to deliver qualifications to my staff and has assured me that these qualifications are fully funded through the WDF. OR, when looking for a learning provider, their website states that the qualifications they deliver are fully funded through the WDF. Is this correct?**

No. This is because:

- the DHSC provides a finite amount of money and each grant holder receives a limited amount of funding

- as the funding year progresses, there is a chance the money will run out
  - employers need to pay the learning provider for the learning that is being commissioned and then reclaim a funding contribution through WDF on completion
  - the qualifications / apprenticeships must have been started on or before 31 March 2024 for WDF to be claimed
  - there is a funding limit of £2,035 per learner per funding year
  - we advise that you seek clarification from any learning providers making such promises as they cannot provide this guarantee.

Please note: The WDF should not be confused with other Government funding initiatives, such as the Education and Skills Funding Agency who commission learning providers directly. Some employers choose a combination of Education and Skills Funding Agency and WDF funding to help develop their workforce. Our Guide to developing your staff provides guidance on how you can develop your workforce.

#### **If we exceed our allocation how do we obtain further funding?**

Formal variation points are planned during the year subject to funds being available. If you think you are likely to exceed your allocation please contact your designated Disbursement Assistant and they will be able to advise you accordingly.

#### **Can funds be allocated per unit?**

No. Funding is claimed on the completion and certification of a full qualification, learning programme or digital module. This should be considered in terms of the length of time the organisation will need to wait before funding can be claimed.

#### **Other issues:**

Should you have any other issues or concerns with any aspect of your grant letter, please direct this to your designated Disbursements Assistant

### **3. Eligibility criteria**

#### **What do my subsidiaries need to do in order to be eligible for WDF funding?**

- Complete an organisation declaration form and submit this to Skills for Care by 28 February 2025 for any additional services that you wish to link to your grant, or for all services if you are a new grant holder in 2024-25;
- Meet the Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS),

- requirements for WDF as set out below;
- Submit valid evidence to you to claim funding;
  - Keep you updated as to what they hope to claim for during the funding year.

### **What are the Adult Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-WDS) requirements in relation to accessing WDF?**

Recipients of the fund are required to ensure and confirm that the required fields within ASC-WDS are accurate and up-to-date in line with the eligibility criteria:

A workplace must fully complete and update an ASC-WDS workplace record on or after 1 April 2024.

1. You must fully complete and update an ASC-WDS workplace record on or after 1 April 2024.
2. You must fully complete individual worker records for all staff with a minimum of 90% of the data completed. These must be fully updated on or after 1 April 2024.
3. Individual records for workers completed before 1 April 2024 which are included in the 90% calculation must be both fully completed and updated.

A workplace's ASC-WDS account is expected to be an accurate reflection of its service and workforce. If the service or workforce changes significantly during the year it is expected that recipients will update ASC-WDS. Failure to do so may affect their ability to claim funding.

### **How can I tell if my workplaces have met the ASC-WDS requirements and how will ASC-WDS eligibility be monitored?**

You must ensure your workplace data is up to date.

**Single workplaces:** When logged in as a single workplace, check eligibility by going to 'Check your WDF data'

- This in-browser function will show whether eligibility has been met at workplace level and staff record level and will highlight areas where more data is required.
- Meeting requirements - The overview page shows whether the requirements have been met for this financial year and the date they met eligibility.
- Not meeting requirements – The overview page shows if requirements have not yet been met –Click 'View your WDF data' to see which areas need to be addressed.

- If, after meeting eligibility, you make changes to your workplace or staff records do not worry – you can click ‘Keep your WDF data up to date’ to see what needs addressing for next financial year. You will still meet the criteria up to 31 March.
- **Parent/subsidiary accounts:** These accounts have the same functionality as single workplaces, but for all the organisation’s workplaces.

Click ‘Check your WDF data’ – The overview page will say meeting criteria once all your workplaces have met the requirements. To check each workplace individually you should click ‘View your workplaces’.

If an organisation has met eligibility in previous years, they will need to confirm the answers are still correct after 1 April.

### **Can I check which of my workplaces have met the ASC-WDS requirements for WDF without logging into the service?**

The funding claim form enables you to check eligibility.

Only those workplaces showing on the organisation drop down list on the first tab of the funding claim form are eligible for funding.

Skills for Care checks eligibility on a weekly basis. Newly eligible workplaces are added to the appropriate claim form and an updated claim form is issued where required.

### **Can the Workforce Development Fund be accessed for shared lives carers?**

Yes, as long as the claiming organisation has incurred the learning and development costs for the shared lives carer and meets the eligibility criteria for the fund.

### **How should shared lives carer information be recorded in ASC-WDS?**

- All shared lived schemes have the option to include shared lives carer worker information in their ASC-WDS account(s) **in addition** to that of their **directly** employed workers (e.g. co-ordinators).
- Local authorities should include the scheme as part of their annual return and have the option to provide the shared lives carer information.
- Recording shared lives carer information: if you decide to include shared lives carers then these should be recorded on the workplace record in the total staff figure and a staff record should be completed for each carer with ‘Other’ selected for their Contract type.
- All other information should be completed in accordance with the staff record requirements.



**Why do the CQC provider and location ids (where applicable), the main service type and website details have to be completed on the organisation declaration form?**

These fields are included to assist with validating that claimants are adult social care employers.

**Do I need to submit completed organisation declaration forms for all subsidiaries who want to access the WDF in 2024-25?**

You will need to submit an organisation declaration form for all your subsidiaries if:

- Your organisation is successful in securing a large national organisation grant agreement with us for the first time in 2024-25, or;
- You did not have a grant in 2023-24.

Any large national organisation who have held a grant in 2023-24 will have their subsidiaries carried forward, subject to your review.

If you wish to add any additional subsidiaries to your grant during the funding year you will need to submit an updated organisation declaration form.

**I have previously held a WDF grant with Skills for Care. Will the subsidiaries we had previously be transferred over to the 2024-25 grant?**

If you previously held a WDF grant in 2023-24 you will be sent a list of all the subsidiaries that were included on this grant. Please return this list detailing which workplaces/subsidiaries you would like to remain linked to your grant during 2024-25 and to also highlight any changes to addresses or ASC-WDS numbers.

If you previously held a grant with Skills for Care but not in 2023-24 then previous subsidiaries will not be carried forward.

**Can I add more subsidiaries during the funding year?**

Yes. Any new subsidiaries will need to meet the eligibility requirements. Just send an updated organisation declaration form to your disbursement assistant with details of the additional workplaces. You also need to advise your disbursement assistant if any subsidiaries need to be removed from your grant.

**I am claiming money for learning and development from another public funding source, can a claim be made under the WDF?**

Employers should review the points below and then decide whether to make a claim

for WDF.

1. The WDF is a contribution to the cost of paid employees undertaking vocational qualifications from our [funded list](#) and this funding allows you to claim from more than one source.
2. Claims can only be made for qualifications or apprenticeships which started on or before 31 March 2024.
3. Each funding source will have its own rules/requirements and it is the responsibility of the recipient of the funding to make sure that they understand and adhere to the rules of the funding they are accessing.
4. WDF is a retrospective funding stream. The employer must have already incurred all costs prior to claiming a contribution towards these costs from WDF. The overarching principle of the WDF is that employers cannot make a profit from their employees undertaking training. You cannot claim for costs that you have not directly incurred.
5. Where employers are claiming from more than one source of public funding they must ensure that they do not claim the same cost from more than one source as this would constitute double funding and is not allowed. Where employers have staff that are completing qualifications which have been funded through another source of public funding, they cannot include any costs such as registration, training delivery and certification when calculating their training costs which have been covered by other funding.
6. It is an employers' responsibility to ensure that they do not claim more funding than the cost to them of employees undertaking training but direct costs such as course fees, employees' salaries and backfill if required (i.e. wage replacement costs) can be included for this fund. For each qualification or apprenticeship the employer cannot claim back more than the advertised WDF contribution, even if the costs incurred exceed this.
7. Employers must ensure that they have records in place to evidence the costs of any funding claims they make.
8. The evidence requirement for claiming WDF for qualifications and apprenticeships is a copy of the learner's certificate which includes the advertised criteria, set out in section 4 of this document.

### **I am accessing 'free' training through a learning provider - am I able to make a claim under the WDF?**

Learning which is advertised as 'free' training is sometimes available from learning providers where they are receiving funding from another body to cover the cost of delivery, such as the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

Where this is the case, claims can still be made under WDF for associated costs, such as employees' salaries while they are undertaking training, coaching and

mentoring costs, external venue costs for the training, cost of expert witness testimony and if required backfill (wage replacement costs).

This is a retrospective funding stream and all costs must have been incurred prior to claiming a contribution towards these costs from WDF. The overarching principle is that an employer is not making a profit from their employees undertaking training - see question above 'I am claiming money for learning and development from another public funding source, can I make a claim under the WDF?'

The evidence requirement for claiming for associated costs of qualifications and apprenticeships is a copy of the learner's certificate which includes the advertised criteria as set out in section 4 of this document

Employers must ensure that they have records in place to evidence the costs of any funding claims they make and provide these when requested by Skills for Care, the Department of Health and Social Care or an authorised representative acting on their behalf. Where associated costs are being claimed these records may contain staff salary information, timesheets, invoices for external venue costs etc. as appropriate. You cannot claim for costs that you have not directly incurred or that have been covered by alternative funding.

**My organisation pays the apprenticeship levy, can I make a claim under the WDF?** (The response below is also relevant to organisations who receive transferred levy funds.)

The apprenticeship levy can only be used to pay training delivery and end-point assessment costs. The levy is a tax being applied by Government so it would not be appropriate to allow public money to offset it.

You can claim WDF alongside the apprenticeship levy but it will not be possible to use the WDF towards training delivery and end-point assessment costs. However, the WDF can be used towards the associated costs of training so for levy paying employers this is what the fund would be claimed towards.

Employers should review the points below and then decide whether to make a claim for WDF.

1. The WDF is a contribution to the cost of paid employees undertaking vocational qualifications and apprenticeships from our funded. This funding allows you to claim from more than one source.
2. Claims can only be made for qualifications or apprenticeships which started on or before 31 March 2024.
3. Each funding source will have its own rules/requirements and it is the

responsibility of the recipient of the funding to make sure that they understand and adhere to the rules of the funding they are accessing.

4. WDF is a retrospective funding stream. The employer must have already incurred all costs prior to claiming a contribution towards these costs from WDF. The overarching principle of the WDF is that employers cannot make a profit from their employees undertaking training. You cannot claim for costs that you have not directly incurred.

5. Where employers are claiming from more than one source of public funding they must ensure that they do not claim the same cost from more than one source as this would constitute double funding and is not allowed. Where employers have staff that are completing qualifications which have been funded through another source of public funding, they cannot include any costs such as registration, training delivery, end point assessment and certification when calculating their training costs which have been covered by other funding.

6. It is an employers' responsibility to ensure that they do not claim more funding than the cost to them of employees undertaking training. Direct costs such as course fees, employees' salaries and backfill if required (i.e. wage replacement costs) can be included for this fund. For each qualification or apprenticeship the employer cannot claim back more than the advertised WDF contribution, even if the costs incurred exceed this.

7. Employers must ensure that they have records in place to evidence the costs of any funding claims they make.

8. The evidence requirement for claiming WDF for qualifications and apprenticeships is a copy of the learner's certificate which includes the advertised criteria, set out in section 4 of this document.

When working out the total cost of learning and end-point assessment, levy paying employers need to exclude the cost of training delivery and end-point assessment which is covered by the levy and calculate based on the remaining costs such as the 20% off the job learning time or wage replacement if they have to bring in cover while the apprentice is undertaking training/off the job learning. The evidence of costs should be retained on file by the employer and they will use the diploma and final standard certificates as set out above to evidence their claims.

#### **4.Evidence requirements**

##### **What is the evidence to claim a qualification?**

The evidence to claim a qualification is a copy of the learner's certificate from the awarding organisation which must contain the following information:

- candidate name
- candidate registration number

- unique learner number
- name of qualification
- qualification code as per the list of funded qualifications and apprenticeships
- the date of issue of the certificate must be between 1 January 2024 - 31 March 2025
- name of the awarding organisation
- name of the learning provider or centre number.

### **What is the evidence to claim an apprenticeship standard?**

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 above question, what is the evidence to claim a qualification) 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 be between 1 January 2024 - 31 March 2025
- the certificate must be issued by the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education (IfATE).

### **What is a Unique Learner Number (ULN)?**

A unique learner number is a 10 digit number which is allocated to a learner and will be theirs for life. This links to the personal learning record which is a lifelong, verified record of a learner's qualification achievements. Learning providers will be able to obtain a ULN for any learner who does not have one.

### **How do I claim for candidates if their name has changed due to marriage/divorce etc.?**

Submit the claim as normal but include details in the covering email to advise which candidate has had the name change providing the existing and the new details. We can then update our records and any further claims will not require the same email.

### **Where can I find guidance/information on the taxation aspect of the payments?**

Skills for Care does not provide any specific guidance for the taxable treatment of WDF grants to recipients. The HMRC web site ([www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)) advises, 'Financial assistance in the form of grants is subject to the normal taxation rules'

therefore we would advise you to seek guidance from your dedicated professional advisors as to the tax treatment for your case.

## 5. Using the funding claim form

### As a grant holder, how do I claim WDF?

You must submit a fully completed funding claim form to Skills for Care. The funding claim form will be unique to each grant holder and must be filled out correctly. Note:

- The original format of the electronic form must not be changed in any way.
- Any amendments to the form cannot be recognised by our system and will result in delay in the claim being processed and payment being issued.
- Additional lines or columns must not be added and a new claim form should be raised if additional space is required.
- For example, if a workplace is not showing on the drop-down menu and is manually typed in, our system will not recognise them as being eligible for funding and will reject that part of the claim.

To claim for qualifications, the funding claim form must show:

- The organisation
- Candidate name
- Unique learner number
- Awarding organisation
- Candidate registration/enrolment number.

Values will automatically be added when you enter the qualification code.

Please ensure that you put entries for qualifications, and apprenticeships on separate lines even where they are for the same learner.

If you have incurred lower costs than the advertised funding value or you have received funding from an alternative source and you wish to claim a lower amount of funding than the advertised value, this can be done by completing the claim form with the candidate and learning details, then including details of the candidates/values to be claimed in your covering e-mail where this is the case.

The completed funding claim form, submission form and evidence should be sent to the designated mailbox. If any information is missing from the funding claim form, Skills for Care reserves the right to return the claim.

You can submit as many claims as you want as and when you have them throughout

the period of the grant agreement. Skills for Care reserves the right to delay processing claims if you have already received a significant amount of funding to ensure that other employers have an opportunity to claim. You will be notified if this is the case.

### **What should I put on the organisation section of the funding claim form?**

This is the workplace at which the candidate being claimed for is based. You simply need to select the relevant workplace from the drop-down menu. Please do not manually enter an organisation, this will delay your claim.

If an establishment is not showing on the funding claim form, either:

- They have not met the ACS-WDS requirements for WDF
- They are not listed on our system as a workplace because we have not received a fully completed organisations declaration form. Check the partners tab of the claim form to see whether the subsidiary is listed.

You will need to contact your disbursement assistant who will be able to advise further.

### **When will I get an updated claim form?**

Our WDF system is updated on a weekly basis to show all the subsidiaries that have achieved the ASC-WDS requirements. If you have newly eligible subsidiaries you will be sent an updated claim form.

### **Can I use an old claim form?**

Yes, we are able accept any funding claim form from the 2024-25 funding year, unless advised otherwise and providing the workplace you want to claim funding for shows in the drop-down menu. However, we advise using the most up to date form.

## **6. Payments**

### **When will we receive payment from Skills for Care for claims submitted?**

Skills for Care undertakes to pay all subsequent claims as and when they are submitted and processed unless you are advised otherwise. We will not be responsible for any delay in payment caused by incomplete or illegible claims or claims sent to the wrong mailbox.

It is your responsibility to submit claims by Skills for Care's deadlines.

### **How will I receive payment?**

Payments will be carried out via BACS. Please make sure that you have submitted your most recent bank details to your Disbursement Assistant. Any correspondence relating to payments will be emailed to the lead contact and administrator. If you require a copy of the remittance advice to also be sent to your finance department, please inform us of the necessary email address so that we can copy them in.