# Multiply Programme – Numeracy in the West of England

## What Is Multiply:

Multiply is the new national programme focused on improving adult numeracy skills. As part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund the programme is targeted at Adults (over 19) who don’t already have Level 2 maths – whether they are in employment or unemployment.

The programme will help **people** to develop their numeracy skills and confidence and:

* Support them into employment or move them closer to employment
* Help them gain confidence with tasks within their current job role and take on additional responsibilities for their employer
* Enable them to manage not only work-related numeracy-based tasks but also personal finances. With the cost of living increasing, this has become even more important to support people’s wellbeing.

It will also support **businesses** to:

* Develop their employee’s numeracy confidence and skills, helping to boost productivity and increase profits
* Invest in their workforce/staff (i.e. as part of staff development programmes) being seen as an employer of choice; and
* Help employees to take on additional responsibilities as part of their development, thus supporting increased productivity.

The programme will start delivery in the **2022/23 academic year** across all areas of the United Kingdom and will have three key areas:

1. Regional allocations and delivery through regions: Most of the delivery will be controlled on a regional basis enabling areas discretion and flexibility to meet specific regional needs.
2. A digital platform to help develop numeracy skills.
3. Development of an evidence base on what works for supporting adult numeracy

## What We Need To Do:

The West of England Combined Authority (alongside other Combined Authorities) will be given a regional Multiply allocation by the Department for Education to support adults to

improve their numeracy skills. We need to identify the key challenges that adults with low levels of numeracy face to developing their skills and also the challenges that our employers face in supporting staff to develop these skills.

We then need to identify the solutions which will work in addressing these issues. Whatever approaches we take must support and dovetail with existing skills and employment provision in the region critically including the devolved Adult Education Budget (both Community Learning and Adult Skills). We want to build on and enhance successful delivery, not complicate and compete with existing provision. We also want the approach to have a strong employer voice taking into account the challenges faced

Underpinning this work should be a solid base of evidence base and we want to work with a range of organisations to develop our understanding of the scale, causes and design of potential solutions to low adult numeracy skills in the region. This will help us design and agree an approach which successfully addresses the specific challenges we face as a region and which we can then use our funding to deliver. We do have starting points and the data at the end of this document broadly illustrates some of the key issues. However, this is only a starting point and we need to access the expertise, knowledge and skills or a range of people and organisations to develop regional and local information to craft an effective programme of activity.

This proforma is the first stage in our approach. Can you please provide as much relevant information, data and intelligence as you can against the questions that are asked on the following pages and return this to [**skills@westofengland-ca.gov.uk**](mailto:skills@westofengland-ca.gov.uk)by **Friday the 6th May** (or earlier if you can).

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| Do you have any known issues with low levels of maths skills within your business? If so what are these issues?   * For existing staff are there any job roles/levels where this is particularly evident? * For new recruits does this relate to any particular job roles/functions? * How do you become aware these issues exist? * Do you think employees are open to discussing them? |
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| What impact does (or could) low levels of maths skills and or confidence with numbers have on your business?  Does the impact relates to areas such as (but not exclusive to):   * Productivity * Business Growth * Staff retention |
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| What actions/initiatives would help tackle low levels of maths skills and/or confidence - for both current employees and/or individuals applying for jobs within your business?   * What support would help address these issues? * How should this be delivered (e.g. in the workplace or outside, within work hours or otherwise) and why? * Are you currently doing anything as a business to address these issues? * Who else could provide the support which is required? |
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| Are there any barriers that your business experiences to supporting employee’s to increase their maths skills and/or maths confidence?  Areas could include:   * Lack of knowledge around support options * Access to training funds * Access to support at a time/manner which suits both the employee and the business |
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