# **Multiply Programme - Information Request**

## 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 challenges that adults with low levels of numeracy face to developing their skills alongside the solutions which will work in addressing these. 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.

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**by **Friday the 29th April** (or earlier if you can). Once we have compiled the responses we will then organise some focus groups to provide an opportunity to discuss this in more detail.

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| **Understanding the Scale of the Challenge of Adults with Low Numeracy Skills Levels*** Please explain your understanding, and experience, of how many adults have low numeracy skills levels (i.e. below a GCSE level) in the Combined Authority area. This could be across the whole region or at a more local level (for instance in the different local authority areas of Bath, Bristol and South Gloucestershire).
* Do you have any data/statistics/intelligence to illustrate your understanding?
* How do you know this? For instance, is this information based on your direct work with adults in the region?
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| *Hint: There is no word count simply tell of what you know!* |
| **Understanding the Causes of Adults Experiencing Low Numeracy Skills Levels*** Please explain your understanding of the range of different reasons why some people in our region experience low levels of numeracy skills including why some people have low levels of confidence with numeracy?
* How do you know this? Do you have any data/statistics to illustrate your understanding?
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| *Hint: There is no word count simply tell of what you know!* |
| **Understanding the Barriers that Adults Face to Developing their Numeracy Skills*** Please explain your understanding of the range of different barriers that adults in our region face in developing their numeracy skills and confidence. For instance, do barriers relate to: lacking confidence in numbers/maths, access to advice and training, the cost of accessing training or taking time away from work etc.
* How do you know this? Do you have any data/statistics to illustrate your understanding?
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| *Hint: There is no word count simply tell of what you know!* |
| **Identifying Solutions*** What are the most effective solutions/approaches to supporting adults in our region with low levels of numeracy to improve their skills and confidence with numbers?
* There may be a range of solutions that could be looked at, which ones would you most prioritise and why?
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| **Delivering the Solutions You Have Identified*** What would we need to have in place to deliver the solutions you have identified?
* What do we already have in place (funding, provision etc.) and what else would we need to put in place?
* How could the solutions you have identified be sustained?
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| **Dovetailing with Other Programmes/Support*** How can we ensure that Multiply overall (including the solutions you have identified) don’t displace, replace and/or duplicate activity especially elements funded through the devolved Adult Education Budget (including both the Community Learning and Adult Skills elements).
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**Numeracy in education**

Looking at involvement in maths-related subjects at KS4 level and beyond is a potential indicator of adult levels of numeracy. The graph below shows the number of pupils **nationally** taking Statistics GCSE as a percentage of pupils taking the Maths GCSE: Statistics is an optional GCSE taken by those interested in more complex mathematics, while Mathematics is a core GCSE taken by most pupils.

The percentage has dropped from 12% in 2009/10 to close to 4% in 2020/21. This suggests that nationally, maths is a less popular subject and one that fewer pupils are choosing to continue to a higher standard.

Looking at the statistics for pupils who have achieved grade 5 or above in English and Mathematics (which are split by parliamentary constituencies), the national and West of England figures initially seem fairly similar. We use this measure because English and Maths are bundled together in the statistics.

**Changes in Participation**

A key issue for addressing low levels of adult numeracy is how many adults are actually participating in in developing their skills. The Learning and Work Institute have conducted an analysis of the FE Data Library data (2010-11 to 2018-19) to understand changes in functional skills participation for learners aged 19 and over between 2011 and 2019. For the West of England, the data shows a picture of significant declining participation across all areas of function skills with an even more challenging picture at national level. In addition, we know the Covid-19 pandemic has caused more even challenges for adults to participate in learning.

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|  | 2011-19 % Change (English and Maths participation) | 2011-19 % Change (English participation) | 2011-19 % Change (Maths participation) | 2011-19 % Change (ESOL participation) |
| West of England | **-35%** | **-43%** | **-39%** | **-22%** |
| England | **-40%** | **-43%** | **-42%** | **-25%** |

**Skills for Life Survey**

The “[2011 Skills for Life Survey: A Survey of Literacy, Numeracy and ICT Levels in England](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/36000/12-p168-2011-skills-for-life-survey.pdf)” includes regional statistics and correlations between the results and factors such as deprivation and English as a first language.

* At **83%** the South West has the highest level of individuals aged 16-65 who have numeracy skills levels at Entry Level 3 or above and the lowest with those at Entry 2 Level or below.
* Numeracy (and literacy and ICT skills) correlate directly with many of the expected factors:
	+ Increase in gross earnings
	+ Decrease in indices of multiple deprivation
	+ Increase in familiarity with English
* Older respondents are less likely to have a high standard of numeracy
* Residents who are renting from the local authority or renting in general are much more likely to have poor levels of numeracy.

The link between literacy and numeracy shows that those individuals (aged 16-64) with low levels of numeracy are also more likely to experience low levels of literacy:



**Numeracy by Employment Sector**

National Numeracy produced a report entitled [Counting on the Recovery](https://www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-04/Counting%20on%20the%20Recovery%20%28compressed%29%20FINAL.pdf) (April 2021) detailing different levels of numeracy across regions in the UK and across different employment sectors. The overall picture in the UK shows that **57%** of the population having poor levels of numeracy (i.e. OECD Level 2 and below). Adults with skills at this level may not be able to understand their pay slips, work out discounts such as 10% or 50% off and convert bills from monthly to quarterly or annual amounts. More detailed comparisons between numeracy levels are available at [this link](https://www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk/what-numeracy/what-do-adult-numeracy-levels-mean). Though the National Numeracy report works at regional level (i.e., South West rather than the West of England) we have access to employment by sector information at West of England level. Therefore, we can estimate numeracy levels in the West of England across different employment sectors:

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|  | Percentage with low numeracy | WoE employees | No. employees with low numeracy, WoE | Percentage of employees in sector (WoE) | Percentage of employees in sector (England) | WoE difference from national average |
| Administrative and Support Service Activities | 61% | 57345 | 34980 | 9% | 4% | 5% |
| Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities | 31% | 63720 | 19753 | 10% | 8% | 2% |
| Accommodation and Food Service Activities | 70% | 40445 | 28312 | 7% | 5% | 2% |
| Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles | 65% | 79065 | 51392 | 13% | 12% | 1% |
| Information and Communication | 27% | 37205 | 10045 | 6% | 5% | 1% |
| Real Estate Activities | 59% | 11250 | 6638 | 2% | 1% | 1% |
| Transportation and Storage | 66% | 32545 | 21480 | 5% | 5% | 0% |
| Financial and Insurance Activities | 36% | 22710 | 8176 | 4% | 4% | -1% |
| Other Service Activities | 65% | 8445 | 5489 | 1% | 6% | -4% |
| Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing | 59% | 275 | 162 | 0% | 1% | -1% |
| Human Health and Social Work Activities | 61% | 79900 | 48739 | 13% | 14% | -1% |
| Education | 42% | 57125 | 23993 | 9% | 11% | -1% |
| Public Administration and Defence; Compulsory Social Security | 43% | 37100 | 15953 | 6% | 8% | -2% |
| Mining and Quarrying | 59% | 115 | 68 | 0% | 2% | -2% |
| Construction | 60% | 28780 | 17268 | 5% | 7% | -2% |
| Manufacturing | 54% | 35010 | 18905 | 6% | 8% | -3% |