

Report to: Paul Wagstaff, Assistant Director (Education and Skills)

October 2022

Award of grant funding to deliver the Multiply adult numeracy programme

Report by: Derry Richardson, Head of Service, Education Communications and Enterprise

Electoral divisions: All

Summary

[Multiply](#) is part of UK Gov. Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), administered by the Department for Education (DfE). It supports the Levelling Up mission to ensure that by 2030, the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the UK. Multiply aims to help people improve their ability to understand and use maths in daily life, home, and work. Whether that be improving household finances, helping children with homework, making more sense of the facts in the media, or improving numeracy skills specific to a line of work.

The County Council has been awarded an allocation of £3,689,038 by the DfE, phased over the next three years, for offering Multiply. It was determined that the most effective way to do this in West Sussex was by inviting organisations to apply for funding to deliver the Multiply programme.

Applications for Multiply grant funding have been received from a wide range of organisations. Following an evaluation process, this report seeks approval to award the funding to those organisations whose applications have been judged as best meeting the requirements.

Recommendations

The Assistant Director (Education and Skills) is asked to approve:

- (1) The award of Multiply delivery grants to the organisations identified in Appendix A up to a total value of £679,791
 - (2) The allocation of further Multiply funds to the anticipated maximum value of £238,000 to organisations delivering:
 - a. Provision which meets the requirements of additional interventions which are currently being developed and which are more specialist
 - b. Provision which meets any locally identified gaps following the initial grant awards.
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1 Background and context

- 1.1 The Government wants everyone to have the opportunity to learn and develop the essential skills that they need to succeed at any age. Numeracy is universally important for individuals' life chances, and for the United Kingdom's economy as a whole. Multiply aims to see meaningful participation that boosts people's ability to use maths in their daily life, at home and work – and enables adults to achieve formal qualification that can open doors for them (such as into a job, progression in a job, or progression to further study).
- 1.2 Multiply is part of the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), administered by the Department for Education (DfE). Multiply supports the 'Levelling Up' mission to ensure that by 2030, the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the UK.
- 1.3 People who improve their numeracy skills are more likely to be in employment, have higher wages, and better wellbeing. Gaining a maths qualification at Level 2 or equivalent also unlocks the door to progress to higher levels of free training to secure a skilled job in our economy. Improved numeracy also matters to businesses right across the country – small and big. Businesses that develop their employees' numeracy skills can boost productivity, increase profits, and improve employee retention.
- 1.4 On 13 April 2022, the Department for Education published their Multiply Investment Prospectus allocating funding to local areas across England to deliver programmes that improve adult numeracy (for adults aged 19 and above), over the next three years. The prospectus outlined a 'menu of interventions' from which the County Council are expected to draw from in developing provision to meet local needs. A separate 'Technical guidance' set out the technical details of how the funding is administered, should be managed and the headline reporting framework and data collection requirements.
- 1.5 In early May 2022 the DfE released the Investment Plan templates which were to be completed, approved by Chief Executives, and submitted to the DfE by 30 June 2022.
- 1.6 All local areas across the United Kingdom, subject to DfE approval of a locally produced Investment Plan, will receive funding to deliver bespoke adult numeracy programmes over the next three years.
- 1.7 The County Council's Investment Plan received approval in August 2022. The Investment Plan detailed a suite of interventions, the majority of which are to be realised through the engagement and partnership working with external organisations who work across West Sussex (set out in Appendix A).
- 1.8 West Sussex County Council is allocated a total of £3,689,038 to specifically deliver Multiply, profiled as follows:

Up to 31/03/2023	£1,115,290
01/04/2023 to 31/03/2024	£1,286,874
01/04/2024 to 31/03/2025	£1,286,874

The target participants are adults (aged 19+) who have not previously attained a GCSE grade 4 / C or higher maths qualification. They can either be working

towards a maths GCSE or Functional Skills Qualification, need specific numeracy skills for their work or progression, or just want to brush up on the skills to help them get on in life and work.

1.9 Multiply must not displace, replace and / or duplicate any existing adult numeracy provision, such as activity funded through the existing Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Adult Education Budget (AEB) statutory entitlement for maths qualifications.

1.10 National success measures are:

- **More adults achieving maths qualifications** courses (up to, and including, Level 2 – with GCSEs and FSQs as the qualifications of choice in England – or equivalent) and an increase in participation in numeracy courses. We expect local areas to evidence improvements in functional numeracy, rather than solely participation in Multiply interventions.
- **Improved labour market outcomes** e.g. fewer numeracy skills gaps reported by employers, and an increase in the proportion of adults that progress into sustained employment and / or education.
- **Increased adult numeracy across the population** – this overall impact, which goes beyond achieving certificates or qualifications, will track both the perceived and actual difference taking part in the programme makes in supporting learners to improve their understanding and use of maths in their daily lives, at home and at work - and to feel more confident when doing so.

2 Proposal details

2.1 As Adult Community Education (ACE) does not currently have an in-house delivery team it is proposed that external organisations are commissioned to deliver the Multiply programme.

2.2 Following consultation with Procurement and Legal services it was agreed that the year 1 funding (up to 31 March 2023) could be administered locally as a grant to pilot approaches and test 'proof of concept'. The decision to distribute grant funding and invite applications follows the successful approach used by the Council to deliver the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme over the last two years.

2.3 Between 01 August 2022 and 04 September 2022 the Council invited applications for grant funding from organisations able to deliver the specified Interventions (as detailed at 1-7 in appendix A). A total grant value of £789,000 was allocated to these interventions; this value was decided on as a result of the development work behind the Investment Plan.

2.4 Applications were received from 12 organisations, with most applying for funding to deliver several interventions. The applications have a total value of £1,545,143, almost double the funding available.

2.5 A panel of Council officers have evaluated the applications which has resulted in the recommendation to award funding to 9 (nine) organisations up to a total value of £679,791.

2.6 Appendix A details the recommended grant awards.

- 2.7 In addition, it is proposed that a further grant application and award process be approved to be run up to a total funding value of £238,000 for:
- Provision which meets the requirements of additional interventions which are currently being developed and which are more specialist and not part of this application round
 - Provision which meets any locally identified gaps following the initial grant awards, if any are identified once delivery commenced.

This grant award process would be run in December 2022 / January 2023

- 2.8 The potential to use a more formal commissioning process to administer funding for years two and three of Multiply (April 2023-March 2025) along with scoping the potential for in-house delivery will be explored. These options will be considered in the context of the wider developments to ACE currently being progressed. Once we have reviewed our approach and those taken by others in discussion with legal and procurement colleagues, the expectation is that we will undertake commissioning activity in January 2023 for delivery from April 2023 to March 2025. Subsequent year allocations will also be subject to a further key decision.

3 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)

- 3.1 In-house delivery of the Multiply Programme. The County Council uses a commissioning model to deliver ACE and so there is no in-house delivery capacity that could be swiftly re-aligned to commence provision of Multiply therefore this option was discounted.

4 Consultation, engagement and advice

- 4.1 Stakeholders have been engaged through a mix of universal and targeted activity using existing circulation lists, targeted emails and approaches, newsletters, social media and word of mouth. This is included consultation to inform the Investment Plan through a "Developing a picture of local need" survey run through Your Voice (results available on request).
- 4.2 WSCC's Multiply lead actively engaged with other local authority leads to share understanding, issues, opportunities and to consider cross-border coherence with elements of the Investment Plans.
- 4.3 The opportunity to apply for grant funding was extensively circulated to key organisations including:
- Existing subcontractors and ESFA Funded providers
 - Sussex Council of Training Providers (SCTP)
 - District and Borough contacts including those who lead on employment and skills initiatives
 - Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) / Sussex Chamber of Commerce

5 Finance

- 5.1 The DfE are funding the Multiply programme. The Multiply programme is ring-fenced and any unspent funding below a 97% threshold will need to be repaid to the DfE.

A maximum of 10% can be used for the management and administration of the programme by the Council.

- 5.2 The first-year grant payment was paid in full to the County Council on 20 September 2022. This is planned to be spent as follows:

	£
Proposed Multiply Delivery Grants	679,791
Proposed Allocation of Further Multiply Funds	238,000
Promotion, Marketing and Training to build Capacity and Sustainability	104,730
Management and Administration (10% less £18,761)	92,769
Total Year 1 Allocation	1,115,290

- 5.3 Statements of the grant usage are required to be submitted annually, certified by the Chief Executive or Section 151 Officer that, to the best of their knowledge, the amounts shown on the statement relate to Eligible Expenditure on Multiply and that the grant has been used for the purposes intended
- 5.4 Payment to the successful providers will be 50% on the return of the signed grant agreement and 50% subject to suitable performance in March 2023. For smaller providers where cashflow may be a barrier, officers will consider and agree suitable payment profiles. Payment is subject to suitable performance to the delivery plans (which formed part of the application for funding and will form part of the grant agreement), participation in project activity such as partnership meetings and engagement events.
- 5.5 Performance monitoring will include:
- Monthly reports submitted by each organisation which will include participant and intervention data, including Individual Learner Record returns where specified and related to the national success measures.
 - Feedback gathered directly and indirectly from participants
 - Feedback from stakeholders and partners
 - In person quality assurance / support visits and observations of activity.
- 5.6 Good value was included as one of the key evaluation criteria in the assessment of applications and will be an aspect of performance monitoring for each provider.

6 Risk implications and mitigations

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
Insufficient demand for Multiply provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a new, national initiative being rolled out at high speed with very little lead time. It is therefore a recognised and accepted risk that awareness raising and initial engagement will need to be an essential aspect of delivery for all partners, to increase the number of participants. • National campaigns are expected in the autumn and, once the project team is in place, local, targeted campaigns will be developed which will supplement the national messaging.
Insufficient coverage across the County for those wanting to access Multiply provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County-wide coverage was considered when selecting providers and the 'best fit' at this time sought to be achieved. • Additional grant funding to be made available to address any gaps which may emerge as delivery commences and demand grows. • Partnership officer role will support the brokerage of need versus potential supply from the funded delivery partners. • Year two and three commissioning yet to be developed and this will take into account new and emerging needs.
Timescales mean that providers can't spend the funding and deliver the proposed outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timescales clearly communicated to partners • Assessment of applications and awards took account of the short, year 1 timeframe. • A range of providers are engaged from small voluntary and community organisations embedded in a specific community to larger, county-wide / regional / national organisations with strong existing infrastructure which enables expansion for additional provision.
Ongoing delays with recruiting the County Council's project team jeopardise project delivery and success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All core project team posts are currently vacant with some yet to be advertised. • Core ACE team, with occasional support from other Education Communications and Enterprise project teams when possible, are currently covering the essentials. • Additional grant funding has been recommended to utilise underspend. • Additional 'trust' is being placed on partners to deliver whilst central support, documentation and processes are being developed and implemented in parallel.
Provision may not meet DfE standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSCC will inspect and undertake observations of provision in line with ACE's established quality assurance framework. • Self-Assessment of provision and performance forms part of the grant agreement • ACE team will support / build the provider network as required to ensure standards are achieved.
Management Information System (MIS) not in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need is already being addressed through procurement of a fit for purpose specialist MIS.

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
to allow for effective data collection, monitoring, analysis and the required Individual Learner Record (ILR) reporting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely to go-live in December 2022 but this is dependent on the capacity of other WSCC departments. • Existing 'work-around' will be used for initial months with the increased risk of inaccurate data returns to be mitigated so far as possible through staff time spent on additional scrutiny and analysis.
Demand for Multiply exceeds funding available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intervention values and grant awards are capped and clearly communicated with potential partners. • Proposals are prioritised and assessed for their impact on the most in need communities. • ACE will continue to engage with partners who are not successfully or receive less than they applied for to support delivery, e.g. through working through the partnership network, accessing and being included in National Numeracy support and Numeracy Champion training and deployment.

7 Policy alignment and compliance

Our Council Plan

7.1 Multiply will help people and communities to fulfil their potential by providing adults with opportunities to improve and develop their skills and their employment prospects.

7.2 Legal Implications

Legal and Procurement Services have been engaged and endorsed the proposal of grant awards / agreements which set out conditions of the funding and the legal implications and standards that are expected to be followed as a condition of the grant.

7.3 Equality duty and human rights assessment

The funding has been distributed in a fair and equal way. Public Sector Equalities Duty (PSED) have been applied to the commissioning and will be set out in the documentation alongside the Council's Values which partners will have to agree to. Through our commissioning, we proactively sought organisations to engage with a diverse audience. All partners we engage are required to have equality policies and codes of conduct and we will review their practice as part of our quality assurance activity.

Data collection and analysis (incl. ILR) will monitor engagement, progress and progression by a wide range of demographics and individuals' characteristics; this is to ensure provision is being accessed proportionately by the local population and that all learners, regardless of having a protected characteristic or not, are progressing and achieving in line with their peers with interventions should this not be the case.

7.4 Climate change

The impact on the climate has been considered in the award of funding, for example ensuring a balance of face to face, local provision alongside remote

engagement opportunities and proposals where Multiply can be added to existing activity. There is also a specific intervention which seeks to support businesses with the numeracy skills and understanding to measure their carbon footprint, identify the most effective measures to reduce their carbon emissions and plan and cost these initiatives

7.5 Crime and disorder

A specific activity detailed in our Implementation Plan is to work in partnership with local prisons to develop interventions which focus on reducing the number of offenders re-offending and increasing the number who are in employment six weeks after release. This intervention has not formed part of this grant funding round as it required further development.

7.6 Public health

The Multiply programme is supporting improved Public Health in several ways including the development of life skills and also through healthy living and healthy cooking interventions through which maths and numeracy skills and confidence development are embedded.

7.7 Social Value

Social value is implicit in ACE and the Multiply interventions. The overarching ambition of the Adult Community Education Service is to maximise adult participation in education and training in order to achieve economic growth, full employment, social inclusion, community cohesion, health and wellbeing.

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Appendix A - Recommended providers for Multiply grant awards

Background papers - None

Appendix A: Recommended providers for Multiply grant awards

Organisation / provider →	Albion in the Community	Arun and Chichester Citizens Advice	Crimsham Farm CIC	Functional Skills UK	Making Theatre Gaining Skills CIC	Rewards Training Recruitment Consultancy	University of Brighton	Whitehead-Ross Education and Consulting Ltd	Workers Education Association (WEA)
1) Provision / interventions which support moving into employment			£15,000	£40,000		£20,000		£40,000	
2) Provision / interventions designed to help people use numeracy to manage their money	£17,759	£87,975	£15,000	£56,350					
3) New intensive and flexible numeracy courses targeted at people without Level 2 maths, leading to a Functional Skills Qualification			£15,000	£56,650					
4) Provision / interventions for parents wanting to increase their numeracy skills in order to help their children, and help with their own progression	£58,868		£15,000					£8,000	
5) Provision / interventions / activities developed in partnership with community organisations and other partners which engage with the hardest to reach learners	£54,420	£60,000	£15,000		£33,696				£29,073
6) Provision of financial literacy training which will support start-up, micro and small businesses				£20,000					
7) Provision which supports businesses with numeracy skills and understanding to measure their carbon footprint, identify the most effective measures to reduce their carbon emissions and plan and cost these initiatives.							£22,000		
Totals	£131,047	£147,975	£75,000	£173,000	£33,696	£20,000	£22,000	£48,000	£29,073