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Guidance notes

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# About West Midlands Adult Learning Awards

The West Midlands Adult Learning Awards seek to recognise and celebrate the achievements of adult learners, businesses, providers and wider partners across the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) area. Through these awards, we are looking to:

* Raise the profile of adult learning across the region
* Engage more residents, businesses and wider stakeholders in adult learning
* Capture and celebrate good practice in adult learning across the region
* Showcase the full range of economic and social benefits of adult learning
* Demonstrate the impact of skills devolution, enabling us to make the case for further devolution.

Award winners are selected for a range of awards across four nomination categories:

* Individual learner
* Educator (includes teachers, trainers, lecturers, tutor, supervisors, or someone who actively enables the learning and development of others)
* Employer
* Learning provision (includes learning providers, partnerships, community organisations)

## Why nominate?

By nominating an individual learner, learning provider, educator, or employer you can celebrate their successes. Learning providers and employers can showcase their work and use it for both recruitment and reputation purposes. Individuals could showcase it on their CVs or LinkedIn profiles to highlight their commitment to professional development and learning.

## Selection of award winners – key dates

* All nominations **must** be submitted by 12 noon GMT on 5 March 2025.
* Winners will be selected in March 2025.
* Winners and their nominators will be notified in April 2025.
* Nominators of non-winners will be sent a certificate of achievement to present to their nominee (after the award ceremony).
* Winners will be announced on 26 June 2025.

The deadline for nominations is final and there will be no extensions provided.

If you haven’t heard from us by the end of April 2025, please assume that your nominee has not been selected as an award winner on this occasion. The decisions of the selection panel are final.

# Awards and eligibility criteria

## Individual learners

We are looking for learners who showcase ways that residents can excel; from career transitions to personal development, from boosting both their career and the local economy to making a difference in their community.

To be considered for an award, individual learners should fulfil at least three of the following:

* Be undertaking a learning journey that improves their quality of life.
* Illustrate the transformational power of learning as an adult and be an inspiration to others.
* Show significant evidence of how their learning experience has changed their life, for example, improved their employment prospects, improved their health and well-being, opened new opportunities, or had a positive impact on their family, friends, colleagues, or community.
* Made a commitment to sustainability and green innovation.
* Have made significant progress in their learning journey and continue to develop their skills.
* Empower and influence other people to achieve their potential or prioritise adult learning opportunities.

The successful individual learner will:

* Elevate the profile of adult learning, helping to make a strong case for the devolution of skills funding through advocacy and media activity.
* Be an ambassador for adult learning in the West Midlands Combined Authority area and promote inclusivity and opportunity for all.

### Inspirational Learner of the Year

We’re looking for a standout individual who has been on a transformational learning journey, and who has shown enthusiasm for continued learning. We want to recognise that learning isn’t restricted to the classroom. We are looking for learners who could motivate others to take up learning, especially those who lack the confidence to do so.

### Workplace Learning Achievement

We are looking for an individual who has improved their skills and career prospects through learning or training in the workplace. They may have retrained, upskilled or completed an apprenticeship funded through the WMCA apprenticeship levy transfer fund. We are looking for learners who have made a real difference to their workplace through their learning journey and used this to boost their career.

### Learning for Work

We’re looking for an individual who has improved their employment prospects and secured a new job as a result of their learning. Examples include accessing learning and training to secure employment, retraining after redundancy or setting up a business.

### Skills for Life Achievement

We are looking for an individual who has recently returned to learning and whose story demonstrates the benefits learning can have on individuals and their families right from the outset. The winner may have returned to learning to improve basic skills such as English, maths and digital skills, or to gain confidence and build self-esteem. The winner will inspire and motivate others to take a first step into learning as an adult – especially those who have not been engaged in learning for many years.

### Individual learner eligibility criteria

* Nominations for individual learners are open to learners who are aged 18 or over on 1 February 2025.
* Learners need to have participated in adult learning provision funded by WMCA. This can include SPF Skills and CWG Legacy Jobs, Skills and Wellbeing, SWAP/gateway provision, Skills Bootcamps, or adult learning funded through Community Learning funding, Adult Education Budget (AEB), Free Courses for Jobs, Multiply or the WMCA apprenticeship levy transfer fund.
* Nominations for individual learners will need to include written statements from the nominee. It is the nominator’s responsibility to explain the nominations process to the nominee and obtain the relevant written statements from the nominee for inclusion in their nomination.
* There is no limit to the number of nominations that one nominator can make. However, we do not accept nominations for one nominee from multiple nominators.
* Nominations for individual learners who have been nominated in previous years, or who have won awards as part of other award initiatives, will be accepted.
* Posthumous or self-nominations are not accepted.

## Educators

We are looking for inspirational educators. An educator could be a teacher, trainer, lecturer, tutor, supervisor, or someone who actively enables the learning and development of others. Winners will be passionate about equipping learners with skills for the future and meet their varied learning needs by adopting inclusive or innovative teaching methods. They will demonstrate their commitment to adult learning, including their own professional development, and will have made a transformational impact on the learners they work with.

### Educator eligibility criteria

* Nominations are open to teachers, tutors, trainers and staff in other roles who deliver or support learning provision funded by WMCA.
* Nominees should be delivering or supporting learning provision funded by WMCA. This can include SPF Skills and CWG Legacy Jobs, Skills and Wellbeing, SWAP/gateway provision, Skills Bootcamps, or adult learning funded through Community Learning funding, Adult Education Budget (AEB), Free Courses for Jobs, Multiply or the WMCA apprenticeship levy transfer fund.
* Nominations for educators will need to include written statements from the nominee and at least one learner. It is the nominator’s responsibility to explain the nominations process to the nominee and obtain the relevant written statements for inclusion in their nomination.
* There is no limit to the number of nominations that one nominator can make. However, we do not accept nominations for one nominee from multiple nominators.
* Nominations for educators who have been nominated in previous years, or who have won awards as part of other award initiatives, will be accepted.
* Nominations can be made by learners or by colleagues. Posthumous or self-nominations are not accepted.

## Learning provision

We’re looking for provision that has had a transformational impact on learners. These opportunities should be funded by WMCA, through SPF Skills and CWG Legacy Jobs, Skills and Wellbeing, SWAP/gateway provision, Skills Bootcamps, or adult learning funded through Community Learning funding, Adult Education Budget (AEB), Skills Bootcamps, Free Courses for Jobs, Multiply or the WMCA apprenticeship levy transfer fund. Specifically, this includes supporting learners to increase their skills, ability and confidence including providing routes into employment or progression at work, or other learning opportunities which may not have been possible previously. We want to recognise that learning doesn’t just stay in the classroom. We are also looking for provision that motivates people to take up learning, especially those who may lack the confidence to do so.

Outstanding learning provision will have:

* Provided clear learning progression routes in learning and/or work.
* Demonstrated strong outcomes and impact through the delivery of high-quality teaching and learning.
* Demonstrated how the learning has helped improve/change learners’ lives and the lives of their families, friends, their workplace or the community.
* Met the needs of local people, businesses and economy.

### Inclusive Learning Provision

We are looking for learning provision that offers inclusive teaching environments for their learners beyond those legally required, including those that have provided exceptional support to marginalised groups. The provider should be able to demonstrate successful and impactful outcomes for learners, as well as impacts on the community.

### Successful Partnership

We are looking for organisations that have worked with, or are currently working with, a partner to successfully deliver inclusive, effective and impactful provision. We are particularly interested in cross-sector partnerships that span core objectives for example homes, transport, health and environment. We are also interested in working between providers, for example further education and higher education institution collaboration. The partnership needs to benefit both organisations, demonstrate clear outcomes and should be inspiring and be easily replicated by other organisations.

### Engaging Adults in Learning

This award is for outstanding commitment to helping individuals in the WMCA area to gain the skills and support that they need for life, work or to access good work. The winner should be able to provide evidence of how they have effectively engaged adults furthest away from the labour market, and how the learning has made a difference to learners’ experiences, opening up other opportunities and impacting those around them.

### Learning provider eligibility criteria

* Nominations are open to learning provision based in the West Midlands where at least two months of the learning activity has taken place between 1 January 2024 and 1 February 2025.
* These opportunities should be funded by WMCA, through SPF Skills and CWG Legacy Jobs, Skills and Wellbeing, SWAP/gateway provision, Skills Bootcamps, or adult learning funded through Community Learning funding, Adult Education Budget (AEB), Skills Bootcamps, Free Courses for Jobs, Multiply, or the WMCA apprenticeship levy transfer fund.
* A learner’s statement must be included in the nomination.
* There is no limit to the number of nominations that one nominator can make. However, nominations for one nominee from multiple nominators are not accepted.
* Nominations for provision that has been nominated in previous years, or provision that has won awards as part of other award initiatives, will be accepted.
* Nominations must be authorised by a relevant senior manager before submission.

## Employers

We’re looking for employers who have invested in outstanding staff training and development that’s had an impact on both the workforce and the business. Learning and training opportunities can include SPF Skills and CWG Legacy Jobs, Skills and Wellbeing, SWAP/gateway provision, Skills Bootcamps, or adult learning funded through Community Learning funding, Adult Education Budget (AEB), Free Courses for Jobs, Multiply or the WMCA apprenticeship levy transfer fund.

Outstanding employers should have:

* An approach to recruitment that widens access to good jobs in the business, particularly to under-represented groups
* A commitment to workforce development, for example as demonstrated through a plan or strategy
* Shown commitment and innovation or have worked to benefit employees wanting to progress at work.

Strong nominations will:

* Illustrate the transformational power of training and development and its impact on the business
* Provide evidence of how the learning has made a difference to its employees, opening up other opportunities and impacting on those around them
* Make a good case for workplace learning provision that could be inspirational to other employers.

### Workplace Learning Champion

This award will recognise an employer who has invested workplace learning and development to improve productivity, raise morale and develop their business. The winner should be providing opportunities for employees to improve their skills for professional development, gaining promotion and/or embarking on a new career.

### Inclusive and Innovative Recruitment and Career Champion

This award is for an employer who has used learning and training to support their talent pipeline and the career prospects of local residents. This could include, for example, offering work experience or placements, investing in apprenticeships or transferring their levy to other local employers, or supporting careers interventions in colleges and schools in the West Midlands.

### Employer eligibility criteria

* Awards are open to employers working in the West Midlands Combined Authority area.
* These opportunities can include SPF Skills and CWG Legacy Jobs, Skills and Wellbeing, SWAP/gateway provision, Skills Bootcamps, or adult learning funded through Community Learning funding, Adult Education Budget (AEB), Free Courses for Jobs, Multiply or the WMCA apprenticeship levy transfer fund.
* A learner’s statement must be included in the nomination.
* There is no limit to the number of nominations that one nominator can make. However, we do not accept nominations for one nominee from multiple nominators.
* Nominations for employers who have won awards as part of other award initiatives will be accepted.
* Nominations must be authorised by relevant senior management before submission due to confidentiality and commercial sensitivity surrounding business activity.

# How to submit a nomination

Please read through the following guidance carefully.

* The awards nominations process is [**online**](https://online1.snapsurveys.com/3sld4y).
* Nominations should be submitted online by the **nominator**.
* It is possible to submit multiple nominations. One form should be completed per nominee.
* We strongly advise that you prepare and draft your nomination using the [nomination questions document](https://www.wmca.org.uk/ALA) in advance. However, you can save a partially completed nomination form and return to it later if needed. To do this, select ‘Save responses’. You will be taken to a page with the link that you can use to resume the survey. You will also have the option to request that this link is emailed to you. The link to your partially completed form is generated online and our team do not have access to it, therefore please keep your link or email safe.
* Based on the information provided, nominations will be considered for all relevant awards. However, we ask that you tailor your responses to the award you think your nomination is most suitable for.

## Preparing and drafting nominations

We strongly advise that you prepare and draft your nomination using the nomination questions document. We recommend that you use this document because:

* It will enable you to review all questions on the nomination form before completing any answers. The online nomination form requires you to complete one section before you can move on to view the next.
* Should you encounter any technical issues with the online form, you will still have a saved copy of your work in a Word document.
* You will have a copy of your final nomination for your own records. Once your nomination has been submitted, you will no longer be able to access it online.

We cannot accept nomination forms that are sent to us using the Word document. It has been provided to help you to draft your nomination only.

# Contact

If you have any questions about the nominations process, please contact [westmidawards@learningandwork.org.uk](mailto:westmidawards@learningandwork.org.uk). We will respond to emails as soon as possible (usually within two working days).