

Evaluation of London Multiply

Final report

Billy Campbell, Emily Kramers, Rakhee Patel,
Beatrice Rosolin

May 2025

Report 625



Institute for Employment Studies

The Institute for Employment Studies is an independent, apolitical, international centre of research and consultancy in public employment policy and organisational human resource management. It works closely with employers in the manufacturing, service and public sectors, government departments, agencies, and professional and employee bodies. For 50 years the Institute has been a focus of knowledge and practical experience in employment and training policy, the operation of labour markets, and human resource planning and development. IES is a not-for-profit organisation which has around 50 multidisciplinary staff and international associates. IES expertise is available to all organisations through research, consultancy, publications and the Internet. Our values infuse our work. We strive for excellence, to be collaborative, and to bring curiosity to what we do. We work with integrity and treat people respectfully and with compassion.

Acknowledgements

The authors are indebted to the London Multiply learners, providers and supporting partners who have all given their time to inform this evaluation. We would also like to extend thanks to colleagues at the Greater London Authority for supporting the evaluation in a range of ways, including sharing their insight into the programme; helping inform research tools; and communicating the evaluation with London Multiply providers. This project has also benefitted from the expertise, fieldwork support, administrative support and graphic design of other IES colleagues, including Becci Newton, Daniel Mason, Louisa Illidge, Jan Northcroft, Ehecatl Hunt Duarte and Clare Rainey.

Institute for Employment Studies
City Gate
185 Dyke Road
Brighton BN3 1TL
UK

Telephone: +44 (0)1273 763400
Email: askIES@employment-studies.co.uk
Website: www.employment-studies.co.uk

Copyright © 2025 Institute for Employment Studies

IES project code: 6385

Contents

Executive summary	1
1 Introduction	3
1.1 Overview of London Multiply	3
1.2 Research aims and questions	5
1.3 Methods	5
1.4 Evaluation limitations	7
2 Experiences of London Multiply	8
2.1 Providers' experiences	9
2.1.1 In what ways was London Multiply different from existing Adult Skills Fund (ASF) provision?	9
2.1.2 How did providers develop their workforces to deliver the provision?	12
2.1.3 How did providers engage with supporting partners?	13
2.2 Community organisations' and employers' experiences	16
2.2.1 How did community organisations and employers engage with London Multiply?	16
2.2.2 Will partners look to continue the same level of engagement after Multiply?	17
2.3 Learners' experiences	18
2.3.1 How did learners describe their experience of London Multiply?	18
2.3.2 What were the challenges associated with engagement?	19
3 Outreach and engagement	21
3.1 How was London Multiply promoted?	22
3.2 What encouraged learners to engage with London Multiply?	24
3.2.1 How did learners hear about London Multiply?	24
3.2.2 Why did learners enrol onto courses?	24
3.2.3 What drove learner engagement?	25
3.2.4 Challenges securing engagement	27
3.3 Who engaged in London Multiply?	27
3.3.1 Learner demographics	27
3.3.2 Engagement from underserved communities	28
4 Learner outcomes	30
4.1 Confidence	31
4.1.1 Confidence managing money	32
4.2 Social integration and civic participation	32
4.2.1 Social integration	32
4.2.2 Civic participation	33
4.3 Health and wellbeing	33
4.4 Skills for and progression into employment	34
4.4.1 Skills for employment	34
4.4.2 Progression into employment	34
4.5 Progression into further learning	35
4.5.1 Changes to learner views on education	35
4.5.2 Progression onto maths courses	35
4.5.3 Progression onto other provision	36
5 Conclusions, recommendations and limitations	38

5.1	Conclusions	38
5.2	Recommendations	39
Appendix 1: List of Multiply interventions		41
Appendix 2: Summary of case study fieldwork		42

Executive summary

Between August 2022 and January 2025 over **59,000 Londoners enrolled onto London Multiply provision, accounting for 24% of all Multiply enrolments nationally**. In December 2023, the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) was commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the London Multiply programme. The evaluation explored the extent to which the programme achieved its goal of improving adult numeracy across London. It also gathered evidence on what works in delivering adult numeracy programmes, particularly for underserved communities.

The research found that **two-thirds (67%) of providers used new, innovative approaches to deliver London Multiply provision**. The programme was flexible and allowed providers to make important adaptations to their provision to deliver accessible, engaging numeracy courses. Key adaptations included embedding numeracy in other skills courses, delivering provision in community settings, and offering a wider range of non-substantive provision (i.e. activities or short courses lasting up to two hours).

Resourcing was a widespread challenge for providers, with two-thirds (65%) experiencing difficulties recruiting and/or upskilling staff to deliver provision. This was largely attributed to the shortage of maths teachers within the wider workforce¹, and negative perceptions of numeracy among staff. To overcome resourcing challenges some providers used hourly paid lecturers. Others focused on internal training and numeracy refresher sessions, delivered by their maths tutors, to build confidence within their existing workforces.

Almost all (97%) learners surveyed said their experience of taking part in London Multiply was positive. Engaging tutors, opportunities to socialise with other learners and the tailored, accessible nature of provision were key drivers for this. Additional feedback from learners indicated that enrolment processes were generally straightforward. However, there was some evidence that contact and course information on provider websites was not always kept up to date. This delayed enrolment for some learners, causing them to feel behind from the outset of their course.

Community organisations were key in supporting delivery of London Multiply. They were able to leverage trust within the communities they support to encourage learners to

¹ [How do shortages of maths teachers affect the within-school allocation of maths teachers to pupils? | Nuffield Foundation](#)

take part in London Multiply. This was particularly effective for engaging Londoners from London Multiply target groups and underserved communities.

Despite this, providers and community partners shared a common view that **developing and maintaining partnerships was time and resource intensive** and were unsure how feasible this would be after the end of the programme. Employers also expressed a similar sentiment.

Overall, **London Multiply was successful in engaging a diverse range of learners.** Notably, Greater London Authority analysis of Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data showed that around three-quarters of learners (72%) were female, two-thirds (68%) were aged 24-49 and one-fifth (14%) considered themselves to have a learning difficulty, disability and/or health problem.

Word of mouth was the most common way for learners to find out about London Multiply. One-third of learners (34%) surveyed heard about their course in this way. Learners shared a variety of reasons for enrolling onto courses, often reflecting individuals' personal circumstances. Most frequently, learners hoped to improve their numeracy skills, gain confidence using numbers, and learn a new skill.

Learners identified a range of factors that helped to sustain their interest and engagement in courses. These largely reflected the key adaptations to provision made by providers. In particular, **shorter courses and the relevance of courses to learners' everyday lives were commended.** This feedback was particularly common among English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learners and parents on courses aimed at helping them to support their children.

London Multiply supported a range of outcomes for learners. Learners and providers commonly reported **increased confidence** navigating everyday life and continuing in education. Additionally, learners were able to develop new social networks with Londoners in circumstances similar to their own, which increased **feelings of social integration.** This was particularly notable among ESOL learners. Combined, these outcomes were able to support **improvements in learners' health and wellbeing.**

In addition, London Multiply appeared to have a positive influence on **learners' perspectives on continuing in education.** GLA analysis of ILR data indicates that **45% of learners progressed onto other Adult Skills Fund courses** between 7 and 180 days after their Multiply course ended. Among those interviewed, several planned to take up Functional Skills qualifications, while others displayed interest in other adult education courses beyond numeracy and maths learning.

1 Introduction

In December 2023, the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) was commissioned by the Greater London Authority (GLA) to undertake an evaluation of the London Multiply programme. This chapter introduces London Multiply and the evaluation aims, research questions and methods.

1.1 Overview of London Multiply

Basic numeracy skills are crucial for Londoners to be able to access further education and good work. Beyond these educational and economic benefits, numeracy skills can also improve personal wellbeing and increase individuals' confidence to participate in their local communities. Department for Education (DfE) data shows that in the 2023-24 academic year just six London boroughs had average Attainment 8 scores² in maths lower than the English average³. Despite this, 10 of the 20 wards with the highest essential skills needs in the UK are located in the capital⁴, and it is estimated that 58% of Londoners have low numeracy skills.⁵

Multiply, announced by the then Chancellor in 2021, was a three-year adult learning programme with an objective to increase functional numeracy levels within the adult population across the UK. The programme was underpinned by 10 core interventions, each with a unique learning aim and in some cases tailored for particular groups of learners. These included courses designed to:

- increase confidence with numbers;
- help people manage their money; and
- support parents with their own progression and with their children's education.

A full list of the 10 interventions is outlined in Appendix 1: List of Multiply interventions.

DfE invited the GLA, as well as other combined and local authorities, to develop investment plans proposing their approach to delivering Multiply in a way that is tailored to the needs of their local populations. The city's wide skills disparity, combined with its

² Attainment 8 data measures the results of students in state-funded schools across 8 GCSE-level qualifications. These include English, maths, sciences and languages among other subjects.

³ [Academic year 2023/24: Key stage 4 performance | Department for Education](#)

⁴ [Modelling Essential Skills Needs Across England | Learning and Work Institute](#)

⁵ [Counting on the recovery: The role for numeracy in 'levelling up' the UK | Pro Bono Economics](#)

population density, resulted in a total Multiply funding allocation for the GLA of £41m, the highest for any area in England

To support the delivery of London Multiply, the GLA's allocation was distributed among 56 providers, all of whom were already delivering Adult Skills Fund (formerly Adult Education Budget⁶) provision. Across providers, it was anticipated that around 31,000 Londoners would engage with the programme over its three-year lifespan, through 300 courses and workshops covering the 10 interventions. GLA analysis of ILR⁷ data indicates that this was exceeded, with over 59,000 enrolments between August 2022 and January 2025, accounting for 24% of Multiply enrolments nationally⁸. Programme delivery continued through to March 2025, therefore the final number of enrolments is likely to have exceeded this further.

While available for all adults aged 19 and over without a level 2 qualification in maths, DfE outlined three key target groups for Multiply provision: parents, care leavers and people with experience of the criminal justice system. London Multiply identified additional target groups, including underserved groups and those less likely to engage in adult education. These included:

- learners for whom English is not their first language;
- learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities; and
- low wage earners and those most likely to be impacted by the rising cost of living.

To increase awareness of, and enrolment in, London Multiply provision, £3.5m of the GLA's Multiply allocation was reserved for activities to support engagement and growth in the learner population.⁹ This included £1.4m for community engagement and outreach, funding an expansion of the Community Outreach Programme (COP) to increase its numeracy focus, and the London Multiply Roadshow.

The London Multiply Roadshow aimed to raise awareness of the London Multiply programme and wider Adult Skills Fund (ASF) provision through 38 free, engaging, community-based events. Events were delivered by an external delivery partner, in collaboration with community organisations and London Multiply providers.

⁶ The Adult Education Budget became the Adult Skills Fund in August 2024. The evaluation explores experiences during both funding periods. For consistency, it is referred to as the Adult Skills Fund throughout this report.

⁷ ILR data only includes data pertaining to substantive provision (i.e. activities or courses lasting more than 2 hours). Therefore the total number of enrolments across both non-substantive and substantive London Multiply provision is likely to be higher than this.

⁸ [Further Education and Skills, 2024 | Department for Education](#)

⁹ [London Multiply Engagement and Outreach programme 2023-24 and 2024-25 financial year | Greater London Authority](#)

1.2 Research aims and questions

IES' evaluation of London Multiply set out to explore the extent to which the programme achieved its aim of improving adult numeracy across the city. It also aimed to strengthen evidence on what works in delivering adult numeracy programmes, particularly for underserved communities.

Five core research questions guided the evaluation to achieve these aims, exploring experiences of London Multiply from the viewpoints of different stakeholders. These research questions are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: London Multiply evaluation research questions

Was London Multiply successful in getting people to engage who may not have engaged otherwise?

[For learners] Was London Multiply successful in helping individuals achieve their personal goals?

[For providers] How successful has London Multiply been in developing new and innovative ways of engaging with providers and people, and improving Londoners' numeracy?

[For other stakeholders] Was London Multiply successful in inspiring members of the community to engage with numeracy learning?

[For employers] Has the London Multiply programme had a positive impact on the number of employees in the labour market with sufficient numeracy skills?

Source: IES, 2025

1.3 Methods

A mixed methods approach was taken to answer the evaluation's research questions. To capture sufficient detail on each of these, a range of research methods were used. Each was tailored to the involvement of different stakeholders in the programme and aimed to capture varying degrees of detail on each stakeholders' experiences.

An overview of the research methods, including their aims and who they engaged, is displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: Overview of the research methods used

Research method	Aims and achieved sample
Scoping interviews with GLA stakeholders	Aim: To gather insight into the key decisions made in the early stages of programme planning and delivery, and to build an understanding of early delivery in order to inform the research tools used in the evaluation.
London Multiply provider survey	Aim: To understand the range of provision offered by London Multiply providers, their experiences of delivery, approaches to outreach and engaging learners, and how they worked with community organisations and employers. Achieved sample: Completed by 49 out of 56 providers (88%).
London Multiply provider case studies	Aim: To explore London Multiply provision in detail by collecting the views of staff overseeing delivery (e.g. Multiply coordinators), staff involved in the day-to-day running of provision, and learners. Provider staff insights were collected through one-to-one interviews, while learner insights were collected through focus groups. To help triangulate insights from interviews, researchers also observed Multiply sessions as part of case studies. Observations aimed to understand how London Multiply was delivered in engaging, accessible ways. Achieved sample: A total of 9 case studies were completed. The composition of case studies is displayed in Source: Department for Education, 2023 Appendix 2: Summary of case study fieldwork.
Additional provider interviews	Aim: To supplement insights captured through provider case studies and capture a wider range of contexts. Achieved sample: A total of 10 additional interviews were completed.
London Multiply learner survey	Aim: To understand learners' experiences of taking part in London Multiply and the outcomes they felt it had supported them to achieve. Achieved sample: Completed by 96 learners.
London Multiply learner interviews	Aim: To understand learners' motivations for enrolling, their experiences of taking part, and any outcomes they felt they had achieved. Achieved sample: The evaluation planned to complete 20 interviews with learners. A total of 19 were achieved.
Interviews with London Multiply partners and employers	Aim: To understand the facilitators and barriers to their engagement in the programme and perceived outcomes for their organisations and/or the Londoners they support. Achieved sample: The evaluation planned to complete 30 interviews with these stakeholders. Reflecting challenges outlined later in this report, a total of 10 interviews were completed.
GLA analysis of ILR data	Aim: To develop further understanding of substantive London Multiply provision, including the type of provision engaged in and learner demographics. The Individualised Learner Record (ILR) provides administrative data on learner's accessing GLA funded adult education provision in London. By combining the ILR for Multiply and the Adult Education Budget (not the Adult Skills Fund) we can monitor education progression and engagement.

1.4 Evaluation limitations

Despite the evaluation's breadth and the range of stakeholders engaged in the research, it is important to consider the limitations within the data collected.

Firstly, qualitative interviews and case studies did not capture insights from either providers delivering interventions aimed at prisoners or prison leavers or providers' senior leadership teams. As a result, the evaluation has limited insight into how effective London Multiply was at engaging Londoners with experience of the criminal justice system, or this group's experiences of engaging in provision. Additionally, in absence of insight from senior leadership teams the evaluation has a reduced understanding about providers' strategic direction beyond London Multiply.

Secondly, the relatively low numbers of learners completing the survey (96 learners) means survey respondents are not representative of the total London Multiply learner population of over 43,000 people. The survey captured the views of only a small proportion of learners and does not provide an accurate insight into the experiences of all London Multiply learners. Additionally, responses came from learners engaged with a small number of providers.

As the learner survey was used to sample learners for qualitative interviews, these insights similarly capture the experiences of learners engaged with a small group of providers.

Finally, reflecting the challenges both providers and supporting partners shared about partnership working, the evaluation includes the views of only a small number of community organisations and employers. Subsequently, some views and experiences may not have been captured and those presented in this report do not reflect the experiences of all supporting partners.

2 Experiences of London Multiply

This chapter outlines London Multiply providers' experiences of designing and delivering London Multiply provision, as well the experiences of supporting partners involved in each of these processes.

Additionally, the chapter presents learners' views on enrolment processes, their experiences of engaging in provision and the challenges associated with engagement.

Chapter summary

- **Providers appreciated the flexibility London Multiply offered**, with over two-thirds (67%) using new, innovative approaches to deliver provision. This allowed them to make important adaptations to their provision to deliver accessible, engaging numeracy courses. Adaptations included embedding numeracy in other skills and recreational courses, delivering provision in community settings, and offering a wider range of non-substantive provision.
- **Two-thirds of providers (65%) reported challenges in recruiting and/or upskilling staff** to deliver London Multiply provision. To overcome this, some providers subcontracted provision to community organisations or used hourly paid lecturers. Others focused on internal training programmes to build the capacity of the existing workforce to deliver London Multiply.
- **Community organisations played a key role in delivery** by providing venues for community-based provision and working closely with providers to tailor provision to the needs of specific communities.
- **Developing and maintaining partnerships with community organisations and employers was challenging** for providers due to the time and resources required. Providers reported particular challenges in engaging employers, owed to employers often having in-house learning and development agendas and limited resource to research the initiative.
- **Community organisations and employers appreciated the opportunity to be involved** in London Multiply, and indicated they would like partnerships to continue beyond the end of the programme. Like providers, both groups discussed the challenges associated with building and maintaining relationships.
- **Providers commended the GLA's regular communication** through fortnightly bulletins, an account manager style single point of contact, and quarterly in-person roundtables.
- **Almost all (97%, $n=93$) learners surveyed said their experience of taking part in London Multiply was positive.** This was largely attributed to engaging tutors, the ability to socialise with other learners, and provision tailored to their needs.
- **Generally, learners found enrolment processes to be straightforward.** However, some experienced challenges finding up to date course and contact information on provider websites.

Key lessons for future Adult Skills Fund provision

- **Continue to embed numeracy into ESOL, English and digital skills courses** to combine the learning of essential skills needed in everyday life.

- **Deliver contextualised numeracy by embedding numbers in other courses** such as creative crafts and health and social care to ensure Londoners with increased anxiety around numbers learn core numeracy skills.

Key lessons for workforce development

- **Give staff an opportunity to explore teaching in different ways**, making it fun and accessible for a diverse range of learners.
- **Highlight the cross-over between subject areas** and the importance of ensuring essential skills courses incorporate English, numeracy and digital skills in equal proportions.
- **Develop internal champions** who can support course design and build staff confidence to deliver integrated courses.

2.1 Providers' experiences

2.1.1 In what ways was London Multiply different from existing Adult Skills Fund (ASF) provision?

Multiply was designed to be unique and distinct from wider ASF provision. DfE guidance stated that provision should be designed in a way that did not displace, replace or duplicate existing numeracy provision¹⁰. In addition, providers were encouraged to make considerations about how provision could attract Londoners less likely to engage in adult education.

Providers shared that Londoners engaging with their provision appeared less confident and were unclear on the steps they wanted to take after London Multiply in comparison with other learners. This was a key driver for ensuring provision was engaging, accessible and distinct from wider adult education.

The evaluation captured a range of ways London Multiply was made distinct, with several innovative approaches to delivery uncovered in the survey, interview and case study data. In the survey, two-thirds (67%) of providers said that they had used a new or innovative approach to deliver their London Multiply provision. These included:

- embedding numeracy into contextually relevant courses and other skills courses;
- delivering provision in the community; and
- delivering shorter or slower paced courses and offering a greater range of non-substantive provision¹¹.

¹⁰ [Multiply: Investment Prospectus \(England\) | Department for Education](#)

¹¹ Non-substantive provision refers to any activity less than two hours in duration. Typically, non-substantive provision is outreach focused.

Embedded numeracy

Embedded numeracy was used across London Multiply provision in two ways: to ensure underserved communities and Londoners with number anxiety accessed numeracy learning, and to deliver numeracy learning with practical applications.

Several providers delivered numbers 'by stealth', embedding numeracy into other skills classes (such as: sewing, shopping and cooking). This allowed providers to deliver core numeracy concepts in contextually relevant ways to support learners' day to day activities. This style of delivery helped providers ensure Londoners with anxiety about using numbers and/or engaging in education were able to learn these core concepts.

'It's a bit like hiding vegetables in your children's food. They're focusing on pottery without actually realising straight away that the emphasis is on the maths part of it'

London Multiply Provider

Numeracy embedded into ESOL provision was another common way London Multiply was embedded into other courses. This frequently taught the language of maths as well as fundamental skills for navigating life in London, such as money handling and reading bus timetables.

Case study: Embedding numeracy into ESOL provision

Haringey Learns partnered with a small community organisation supporting first generation female Somali migrants. Together, they were able to support a group of women to build the language and numeracy skills needed to produce home textiles, such as curtains, cushion covers and duvets.

In the early weeks of a short course tutors delivered ESOL provision focused on teaching key numeracy-related language that is commonplace in daily life. This included language around money handling, including currency, and how to navigate shopping. The course then progressed to teach language associated with textiles, such as measurements, materials and haberdashery.

After these lessons, tutors accompanied the group to a local market. The group was tasked with using their acquired language to purchase the materials needed to make textiles for the home, ensuring they used the correct units of measurement and received the correct change.

Staff at Haringey Learns praised the success of the course and its ability to teach practical skills in a digestible way and facilitate new skills within the community.

"We ran a course in a primary school. There was a bunch of lovely ladies that wanted to go out to the market and buy some materials to make some curtains for their house, but they didn't have the language, and they didn't know what's an inch and what's a centimetre. We did a practical course on measuring up for curtains, embedded in the language, helping them work out how much material they need. Then we took them to the market and taught them how to buy it. It makes a practical difference to their life."

Community-based delivery

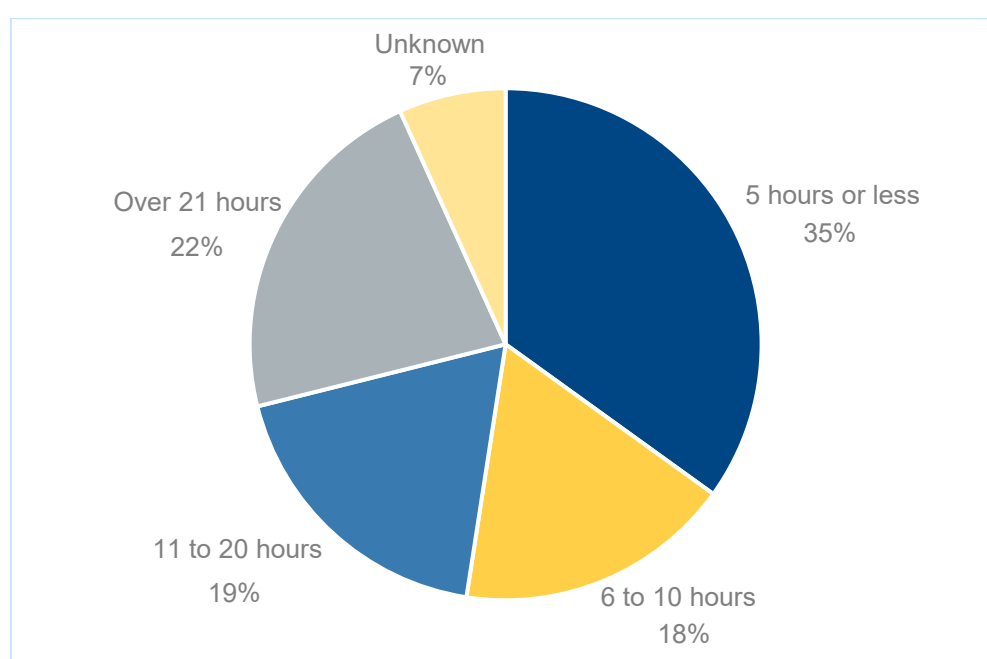
In partnership with community organisations, providers were able to take provision into local communities. This allowed providers to deliver London Multiply in safe, trusted spaces with support from organisations familiar to Londoners.

Providers explained that this opportunity facilitated by London Multiply allowed them to build trust among underserved communities and engage Londoners least likely to engage in adult education.

Shorter, slower paced and non-substantive provision

GLA analysis of ILR data highlights that over one-third of enrolments (35%) were on courses that lasted five hours or less (see Figure 1). Similarly, over one-quarter of enrolments (26%) were on courses that started and finished on the same day.

Figure 1: Multiply enrolments by course duration (hours)



Source: GLA analysis of ILR data (DfE, FE and Skills), 2025.

Base: 58,980 enrolments.

Note: Includes enrolments on London Multiply courses between August 2022 and January 2025

Note: ILR data only includes data pertaining to substantive provision (i.e. courses lasting 2 hours or more). Therefore, the proportion of Londoners enrolling on courses lasting 5 hours or less may be higher than presented.

In addition to these short substantive courses, providers offered an increased amount of non-substantive provision using London Multiply funding. These were delivered as taster sessions for wider adult education and short workshops, often delivered in the community, to give Londoners an insight into adult education. This allowed providers to develop pathways towards Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQs) through three manageable steps:

- short workshops, delivered in the community, introducing adult learning and core numeracy concepts;
- longer 'prepare for' courses, also delivered with London Multiply funding, designed to support Londoners to work towards FSQs and ESOL provision, among other courses; and

- progression into FSQs, ESOL provision and other level 2 equivalent accredited skills courses.

Providers explained that this three-step approach was designed to target people from underserved communities who may be nervous about engaging in adult education or had not been in education in the UK.

Effects of delays at the start of the programme

When discussing innovation and delivery, providers often referred to the knock-on effect of contracting delays from DfE at the start of the programme. They explained that the late arrival of contracts meant they were unable to recruit staff, engage community organisations or begin designing provision within planned timelines.

Some providers indicated that these knock-on delays meant they could not be as innovative as they might otherwise have been. They felt they had to deliver what was achievable, rather than what they perceived to be innovative. Moreover, several of the key adaptations providers identified were made in their last 12 to 18 months of delivery, reflecting the time required to establish new provision.

2.1.2 How did providers develop their workforces to deliver the provision?

London Multiply providers frequently discussed the challenges they experienced recruiting and upskilling staff to deliver provision. This was initially captured in the survey, where two-thirds of providers (65%) said that recruiting and upskilling staff was challenging.

Challenges with recruitment and workforce development

Recruitment challenges were largely influenced by the wider context of the education sector which is experiencing a shortage of maths teachers¹. Existing shortages, coupled with limited interest in job adverts resulted in some providers using hourly paid lecturers to deliver classes and workshops. For some providers, recruitment challenges contributed to delays in starting to deliver London Multiply in year one of the programme.

Additionally, providers with lower funding allocations discussed the financial constraints they experienced when trying to recruit tutors. They explained that once a tutor's salary had been subtracted from their allocation, they had limited funds to design innovative provision, manage and coordinate delivery, and advertise to learners.

Providers who upskilled their existing workforces faced different challenges in readying staff for London Multiply provision. Staff overseeing the delivery and coordination of provision explained that perceptions of numeracy were sometimes as difficult to overcome among delivery staff as learners. This occasionally resulted in tutors expressing negative views about the introduction of embedded numeracy.

“One of the biggest challenges has been preconceptions around maths. Not just learners, but community partners too, and teachers. You mention maths and the reaction is ‘ugh that wasn’t my favourite subject. The whole attitude towards maths has been a big issue, even among staff.”

London Multiply provider

Solutions to improve resource and capacity

Providers tried to overcome the challenges associated with recruitment and workforce development through a range of actions. They tried to make positions more attractive, for example by increasing advertised salaries. This, however, was not a feasible option for providers with lower funding allocations. Instead, these providers subcontracted local and community organisations to deliver courses¹².

To develop existing workforces, internal training programmes and open discussions with staff who were apprehensive about providing the support were essential. Staff overseeing provision explained that supporting staff to feel equipped and safe to deliver provision was key. This was achieved in the following ways:

- explaining London Multiply in detail, including its pre-entry level, applied nature and distinction from existing numeracy learning;
- fostering a collaborative, supportive culture around numeracy by encouraging maths tutors to offer numeracy refresher sessions to colleagues; and
- working with tutors to identify where numeracy already existed in their courses and discussing how this can be expanded to form London Multiply provision.

"Initially some teachers pushed back on embedded numeracy, but now after seeing the learners' responses they're asking us to upskill them so they can go about embedding numeracy in their own courses."

London Multiply provider

2.1.3 How did providers engage with supporting partners?

London Multiply providers engaged with community organisations and employers in different ways to support the engagement of learners, delivery of courses, and outcomes for learners. Engaging these stakeholders came with distinct challenges but when successful resulted in positive outcomes for learners.

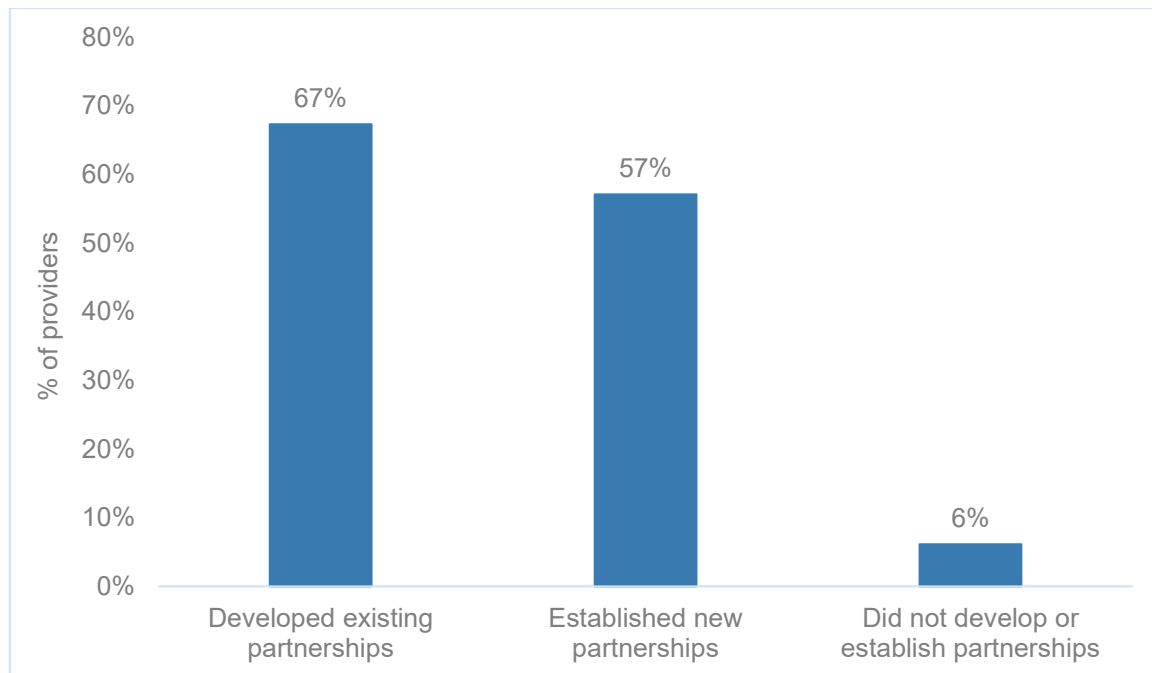
Engagement with community organisations

Nearly all providers who responded to the survey (94%) said that delivering London Multiply provision allowed them to develop existing relationships or establish new relationships with local organisations. Specifically, two thirds (67%) developed existing partnerships, and over half (57%) established new partnerships (see Figure 2). Despite

¹² GLA analysis of ILR data indicates that only 3% of London Multiply provision was subcontracted. It is important to note that this does not include non-substantive provision which the evaluation found to be more commonly delivered in partnership with community organisations.

this, providers explained that engaging community organisations could be a challenging process.

Figure 2: How London Multiply supported partnerships with community organisations



Source: IES, 2025

Base: 48 providers

Note: This question was multiple choice, therefore the base and % totals more than 100% of respondents.

Providers described taking a ‘scattergun’ approach to engaging community organisations rather than a strategic or targeted effort. This was due to limited capacity within their own organisation and within community organisations. Particularly for providers with smaller allocations, establishing and maintaining partnerships was resource intensive and often not feasible alongside other responsibilities. Third sector community organisations, in particular, were not able to commit resources for extended periods of time.

Nonetheless, effective partnerships were established with many different types of community organisations, including: food banks, homelessness support organisations, religious centres and organisations supporting ESOL learners and ethnic minority groups. Providers that were able to establish successful relationships with community organisations outlined their varying degrees of involvement in the design and delivery of provision. This included:

- community organisations offering venues for courses to be delivered and advertising courses to the community;
- consultations with community organisations during the design phase of interventions to understand the needs of underserved communities; and
- subcontracting provision to community organisations.

Local authorities delivering London Multiply reported higher levels of success in engaging community organisations. Often, they attributed this to existing partnerships with local community organisations.

Case study: Co-designing courses with community organisations

The City Literary Institute carried out an informal consultation with community organisations working across London. During this time, they were able to ask organisations directly what prevalent needs exist within the communities they support.

Some community organisations explained that some Londoners they worked with had previously run businesses and would like to know how to manage the costs associated with running a business in more detail. They were also interested in understanding how to read a payslip correctly.

Following this, The City Literary Institute were able to build a short business management course which touched on these topics, delivered in partnership with a community organisation in a community venue.

Engagement with employers

Engaging employers in provision was notably more challenging for providers. In the survey, two-fifths (39%) of providers said they were in the process of, or had co-designed London Multiply provision with employers.

Providers were able to engage local and national employers, including the NHS (see Chapter 2.2 for more information on NHS involvement in London Multiply). As with community organisations, employers had varying levels of involvement in the design and delivery of engagement. This included:

- consultations with employers to understand their numeracy skills needs and support the design of industry appropriate provision;
- bespoke courses to support entry into and progression within an organisation; and
- bespoke courses for employees to support with day-to-day operations, and an understanding of payslips, tax and national insurance contributions.

Providers outlined the challenges associated with engaging employers. Several felt that employers did not see the benefit of releasing staff for training courses. Additionally, large employers often had their own learning and development agendas. Even if these did not include numeracy, employers would often not provide time for staff to engage with other skills initiatives. Others highlighted that employers, especially small employers, do not have adequate resources to research initiatives such as London Multiply and can be wary about providers contacting them with the offer of free support.

To boost employer confidence in engaging with providers, it was suggested that the GLA develop an employer-focused webpage outlining ASF provision in London. This should provide easy-to-access information on who London's ASF providers are, the variety of courses on offer, and the benefits to employers should they choose to support provision.

Partnership working with the Greater London Authority and other providers

Working relationships with the GLA and between providers were also commended in interviews. Providers found having a single point of contact in the style of an account manager useful for getting timely responses to practical queries. Additionally, regular bulletins shared by the GLA outlining programme progress and updates were viewed positively.

In-person roundtables hosted by the GLA provided space for providers to come together and discuss tried and tested approaches, share best practice and brainstorm the legacy of Multiply. Several explained that this had encouraged stronger partnerships with neighbouring providers, with some maintaining contact between the GLA organised meetings.

Providers widely felt that roundtables could be replicated to support other programmes within adult education. One suggestion to improve the sessions was to periodically extend invites to tutors. It was felt that this could improve awareness of day-to-day delivery among managers and senior colleagues, and help assess whether ideas generated in the session were practical and feasible to deliver.

2.2 Community organisations' and employers' experiences

2.2.1 How did community organisations and employers engage with London Multiply?

Community organisations and employers described different ways of initially engaging with London Multiply.

Some community organisations indicated that they received emails from providers outlining the co-design possibilities London Multiply offered, and how the programme can support underserved communities. Others indicated that providers organised community engagement events where they provided detailed information on the initiative and the variety of ways organisations can get involved. Generally, community organisations were positive about these types of approach from providers.

Several employers interviewed explained that their involvement in London Multiply was a result of existing relationships with providers.

Other community organisations and employers indicated that they had heard about London Multiply and proactively reached out to providers. Generally, both partners felt that this approach did not translate into viable interventions due to:

- limited capacity within providers to respond to requests and co-design bespoke support for individual communities;
- a reluctance from provider staff to travel into neighbouring communities, preferring to deliver within a proximity to their base, coupled with challenges encouraging Londoners to travel outside of their community;

- community organisations' limited awareness of provider and course calendars, which resulted in requests for support at times when providers could not help; and
- not feeling equipped to approach conversations around co-designing or accessing courses for their employees, particularly reported among employers.

Some community organisations and employers were able to overcome these challenges through their engagement with the Community Outreach Programme (COP). Organisations involved were able to share ideas with COP staff, who were then able to facilitate introductions with appropriate, local providers.

Case study: Course co-design with NHS trusts

In response to healthcare staff shortages, West London College co-designed London Multiply provision with an NHS employer to support access to careers in the industry. The organisations met at a jobs fair and quickly identified the opportunity for partnership working to address skills gaps and recruitment challenges.

Discussions between the organisations identified that often applicants have the required qualities to become exemplary healthcare employees. However, a key requirement of working in the industry is a level 2 maths qualification. In their daily tasks, people working in healthcare are responsible for:

- accurately calculating medication dosages based on patients' BMIs, ages and existing medical conditions;
- interpreting vital signs, such as heart rates and blood pressure; and
- interpreting test results.

All of these require a basic understanding of functional numeracy.

Together, West London College and the NHS employer designed a course focused on teaching essential numeracy skills, embedded in the context of healthcare. This allowed students to begin familiarising themselves with the language, responsibilities and numeracy that form working in healthcare.

As part of the collaboration, the NHS employer has been able to lower its entry requirements onto some of its training courses to support learners' first steps into employment within the healthcare industry.

2.2.2 Will partners look to continue the same level of engagement after Multiply?

Both community organisations and employers consistently reported a willingness to continue engaging with providers beyond London Multiply. Employers in particular wanted to continue to engage with London Multiply providers because they had started to see improvements in the numeracy skills of employees and new recruits.

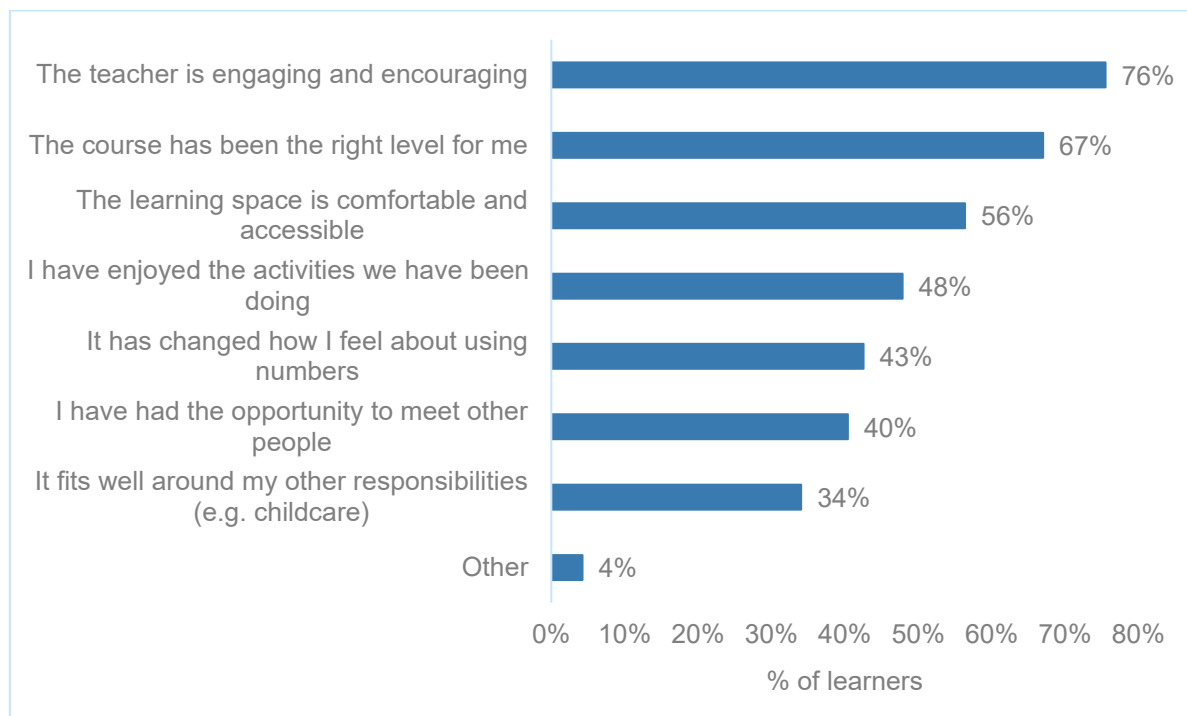
However, many indicated that providers' capacity and funding would be the deciding factor.

2.3 Learners' experiences

2.3.1 How did learners describe their experience of London Multiply?

Learners were consistently positive about their experiences of taking part in London Multiply provision, with almost all surveyed learners (97%) saying they had a positive experience. Across the survey and interviews, the engaging and encouraging nature of tutors and the level, pace and accessibility of the courses were key drivers of learners' positive experiences (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Influences on learners' positive experiences of London Multiply



Source: IES, 2025.

Base: 94 learners.

Note: This question was multiple choice, therefore the base and % totals more than 100% of respondents.

Tutors were described to be patient, enthusiastic and encouraging. Learners praised the tutors' ability to inspire them to challenge their negative perceptions of numeracy. They did this by explaining challenging concepts to learners multiple times, both as a group and one-to-one. This was noted to be particularly useful for classmates who were neurodiverse and ESOL learners.

Parents on courses designed to help them to support their children were particularly positive about the pace and digestibility of courses. A group of parents attending a course based in their children's primary school, delivered by primary school teachers, spoke highly of the alignment between the content they and their children were learning. This allowed them to help their children with their homework with confidence, rather than shying away from it as they might have done before engaging.

Working in groups with other learners was a highlight of several learners' experiences. They explained that not only did this help them understand new, challenging concepts, it

provided them an opportunity to socialise with new people. ESOL learners particularly valued this opportunity, viewing it as an opportunity to practise their English.

Some learners would have liked more opportunities to collaborate with their classmates. They suggested providers offer online forums or unguided Teams calls for learners to work through homework together.

ESOL learners also highlighted the importance of learning from tutors with similar characteristics to them. This extended the courses' ability to inspire learners to set goals.

"Being a lady myself, I like that my teacher is female. I always had this idea in my head that men are better at maths, so I like that she is female. And black. I can relate to her in that way. If she can do it, then there's no reason I can't do it"

London Multiply learner

Owed to these positive experiences learners frequently shared that, if they had not already, they would recommend London Multiply to their friends, family and people within their communities.

2.3.2 What were the challenges associated with engagement?

Despite the overall positive experiences of engaging in provision, learners did identify some of the challenges associated with both initial and continued engagement in their course.

Some learners found course information difficult to find. Provider websites were described to be challenging to navigate with specific course information, such as course outlines and timetables, buried within webpages. Others shared that websites had out of date information, advertising courses with start dates in the past or incorrect staff contact information.

For some this created delays to their enrolment, surfacing past experiences of being behind in education. This, they felt, could have easily discouraged them from taking part. Learners suggested provider websites be made more accessible, with specific course information easier to identify on programme landing pages.

"Although I started researching early, the information being incorrect on the website, the lack of communication and not hearing anything back when I originally applied, I'm now a few weeks behind. I've already experienced what it's like to be behind and I just wasn't willing to be in that situation again"

London Multiply learner

Additionally, learners felt that providers required extensive information and often queried the need for providers to know work histories, incomes and addresses. Some learners described back and forth communication with the provider about what information needed to be shared, which in some cases delayed the receipt of college ID numbers and login information.

As London Multiply engaged learners with differing degrees of understanding of numeracy, classes often included learners with mixed abilities. Learners explained that this could hinder their class' progress as tutors had to focus additional resource on those falling behind, although they appreciated that tutors did try to maintain pace. This also reduced learners' abilities to collaborate with classmates.

Learners taking part in longer courses shared that class numbers dwindled quickly across the duration of the course. This was particularly mentioned in relation to courses that used a numbers 'by stealth' approach and was attributed to the use of the word 'maths', which discouraged people from continuing to engage. These learners, who felt more confident with numbers at the outset of their course, suggested that providers make numeracy more implicit in the courses they provide so that their classmates maintain engagement.

Finally, courses that used computers for tuition or were delivered online faced frequent technical challenges. These included:

- learners with lower levels of digital literacy not being able to engage fully in online sessions due to limited awareness of how to use Microsoft Teams and similar software; and
- computers in libraries could be slow and sometimes crashed, causing learners to lose their progress and have to restart tasks. This made some feel they were falling behind the class.

3 Outreach and engagement

This chapter explores how learners became involved in London Multiply provision, starting with a discussion on provider approaches to outreach and advertising. Following this is an exploration of the drivers for learner enrolment and sustained engagement, and the challenges associated with both of these.

The chapter closes with a summary of ILR data on who engaged in London Multiply provision, and provider reflections on engagement from underserved communities.

Chapter summary

- **Collaboration with community organisations was viewed to be the most effective approach to engaging Londoners in provision.** This was attributed to the trust and familiarity these organisations have among the communities they support.
- The most common way **learners heard about provision was through word of mouth.**
- London Multiply **target groups and underserved communities were introduced to provision through targeted advertising or conversations with other services.** For example, parents heard about provision through school newsletters, and ESOL learners heard about provision through community organisations, Jobcentre Work Coaches and Home Office case workers.
- **Learners enrolled on courses for a range of personal reasons.** Most commonly, learners wanted to improve their numeracy skills and confidence using numbers or improve their employment prospects.
- **Learners appreciated the length of courses and course content.** These were important for driving and sustaining their engagement. In particular, shorter courses, courses relevant to everyday life and interventions tailored to people's circumstances were praised for supporting sustained engagement.
- **Providers felt they successfully engaged a diverse range of Londoners** in their London Multiply provision. This was reflected in ILR data, which highlights the wide-ranging demographic characteristics of Londoners that engaged in substantive courses.

Key lessons for engaging learners

- **Working with community organisations** to understand Londoners' skills needs and promote provision appropriately is paramount in designing relevant, engaging provision.
- **Delivering provision in communities' trusted spaces**, such as food banks, voluntary organisation hubs, religious centres and libraries is effective for building trust among Londoners.
- Using **short courses and a numbers 'by stealth' approach** encourages learners less confident using numbers and/or with previous negative experiences of learning numeracy to take up provision.

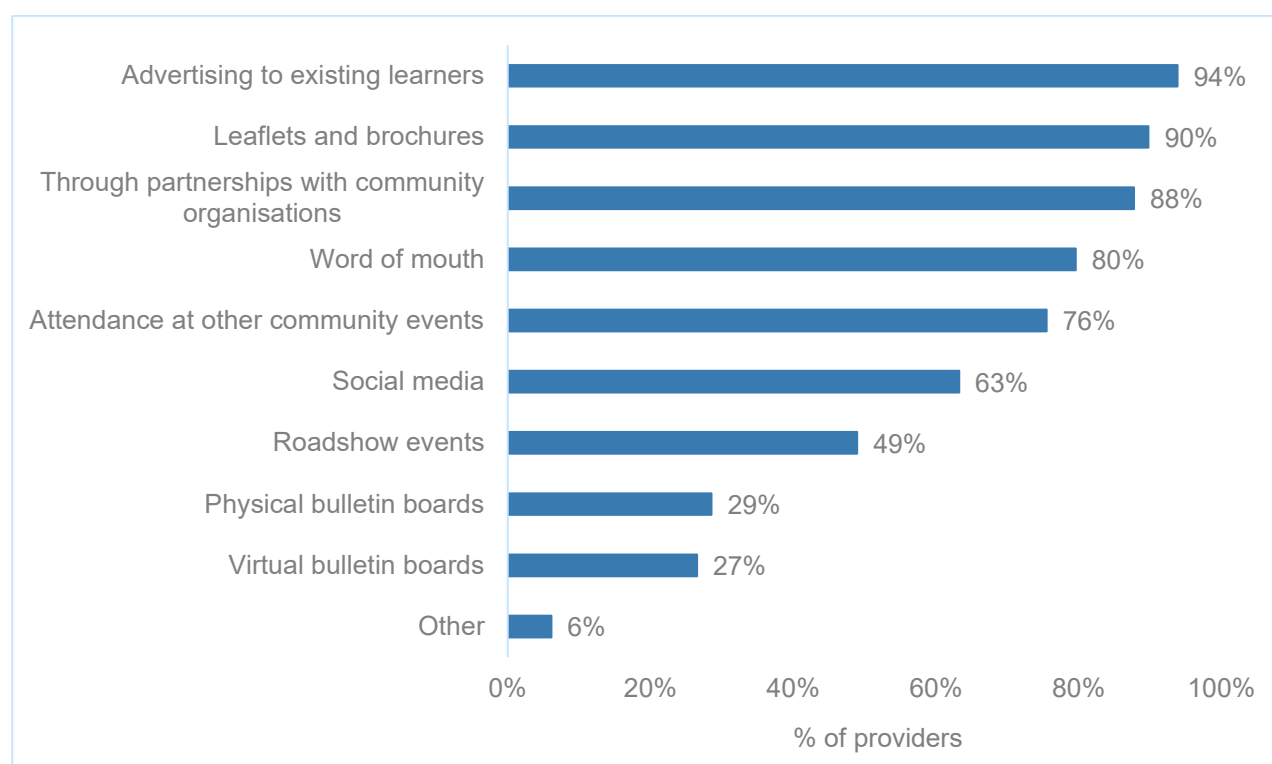
Key lessons for future referral routes

- **Offering community-based, off-site provision** has the ability to introduce Londoners to adult education who may not otherwise engage in learning.
- **Maintaining taster sessions and workshops** to retain slower-paced routes into substantive and accredited provision is important for establishing manageable pathways into ASF provision.

3.1 How was London Multiply promoted?

The provider survey identified numerous channels through which London Multiply courses were advertised. Figure 4 shows that the most common were advertising to existing learners, using leaflets and brochures, and through partnerships with community organisations.

Figure 4: How providers promoted London Multiply provision



Source: IES, 2025.

Base: 48 providers.

Note: This question was multiple choice, therefore the base and % totals more than 100% of respondents.

Collaborating with community organisations was highlighted to be the most successful way of promoting courses. Providers and community organisations felt that the trusted voice of the organisations was key in establishing interest and encouraging learners to explore learning options available to them. This was particularly important for engaging learners from underserved communities.

"The centre is a familiar place to the care leavers. They may already be present in the building earlier in the day. We [run the cooking class] around teatime so there's an incentive for them in the fact that their dinner is sorted out for them, and maybe lunch for tomorrow as well."

Community organisation

Promotion through collaboration took a variety of approaches, each able to reach different groups of Londoners. These included:

- hosting stalls at jobs fairs, libraries and the London Multiply roadshow;
- visiting community organisations where they are based, and engaging with learners in the venues they feel comfortable in; and
- encouraging community organisations to design advertising materials tailored to the communities they support.

Some providers outlined the challenges they experienced advertising courses to underserved communities. This was commonly associated with reaching ESOL learners and Londoners with lower levels of digital literacy. These challenges were twofold:

- Some providers said marketing teams would not design non-digital marketing due to high costs and low returns.
- Others felt that physical advertising would be too general and ineffective at reaching various sub-groups, largely due to marketing budgets not covering materials produced in different languages, or covering the range of interventions offered.

"There's no point promoting it online because digital exclusion is enormous, there's no point promoting it on a leaflet because they can't read English. The promotion has to be done by people who are already out there in the community... Londoners have to hear about things from people they trust at the mosques, at the community centres, at the churches."

London Multiply provider

In addition to providers directly promoting their provision, the GLA supported advertising of London Multiply more broadly across London. This was in the form of:

- the London Multiply Roadshow, which was comprised of 38 community-based events, delivered in partnership with providers and community organisations to promote London Multiply and wider ASF provision;
- a series of short videos showcasing the delivery approaches and successes of London Multiply provision¹³; and
- engaging with national partners, such as National Numeracy, to encourage discussion about the importance of numeracy skills, and highlight London Multiply provision.

¹³ [Numeracy Learning in London](#)

3.2 What encouraged learners to engage with London Multiply?

3.2.1 How did learners hear about London Multiply?

Reflecting the variety of outreach approaches providers used, learners shared a range of ways they heard about London Multiply. One-third (34%) of learners surveyed said they heard about the course they attended through word of mouth. This was also reflected in interviews, with learners indicating that friends and family who attended college signposted them to the courses.

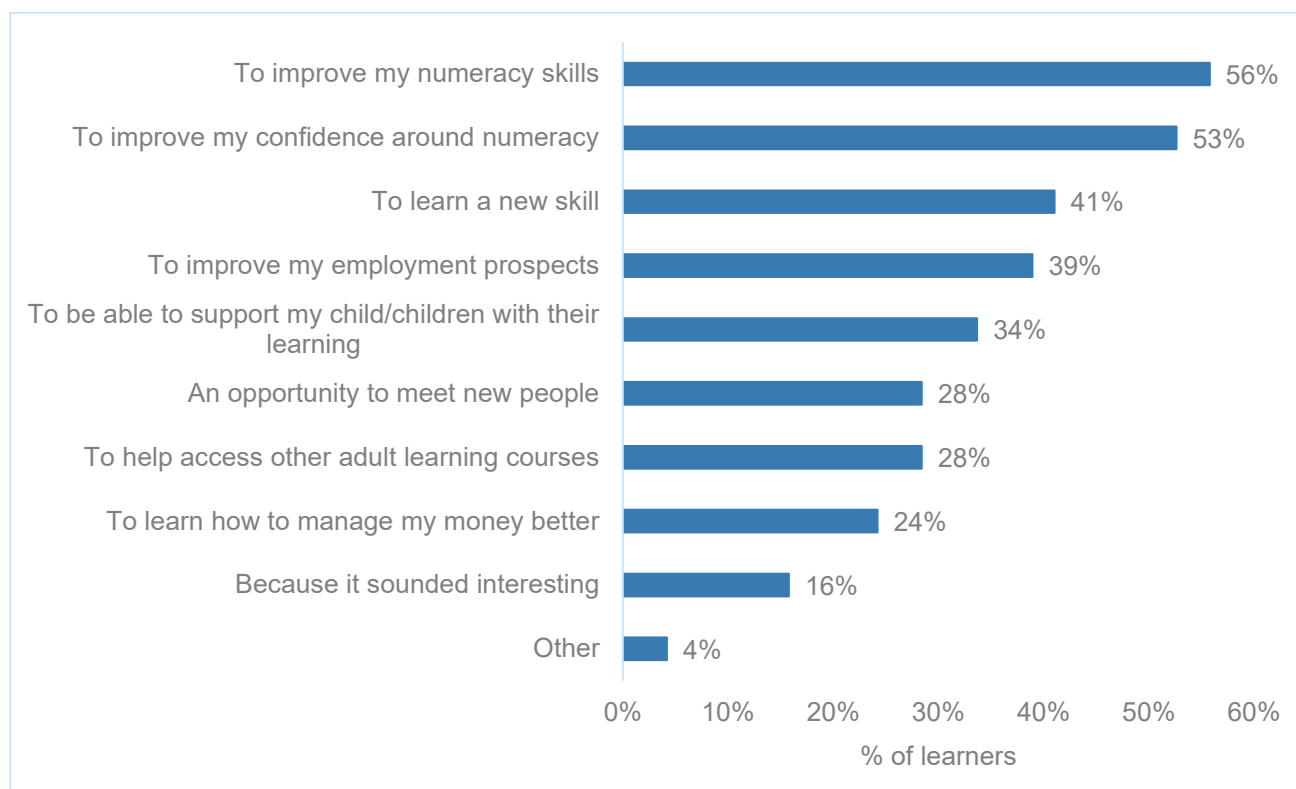
Targeted communications were most commonly reported by key target groups. For example, parents said they heard about their course through their children's school newsletters. Similarly, refugees and ESOL learners shared that their case workers and/or Jobcentre work coaches signposted them to ESOL courses with London Multiply embedded within them.

Other less common ways of hearing about courses were through other statutory support services such as social workers and midwives, or at the London Multiply Roadshow.

3.2.2 Why did learners enrol onto courses?

Learners shared a variety of reasons for engaging in London Multiply provision, each often reflecting their personal circumstances. Figure 5 shows that over half of surveyed learners indicated that they took part to:

- improve their numeracy skills (56%);
- improve their confidence around numeracy (53%); or
- to learn a new skill (53%).

Figure 5: Learner motivations to enrol on London Multiply provision

Source: IES, 2025.

Base: 96 learners.

Note: This question was multiple choice, therefore the base and % totals more than 100% of respondents.

A desire to increase confidence was widespread among participants in interviews. People with previous negative experiences of education or low confidence using numbers reported that they wanted to prove to themselves they were able to develop their day-to-day numeracy skills. Alternatively, parents cited a desire to better support their children with their studies and hoped to increase their confidence through London Multiply. This was particularly common among parents who speak English as a second language.

Another common driver for enrolment was to access further adult learning with an aim to obtain formal qualifications. This was often to improve employment prospects, or progression within employment.

3.2.3 What drove learner engagement?

Learners outlined features of London Multiply courses that they valued, and which they felt encouraged them to continue engaging. These often reflected key adaptations providers made (as outlined in Chapter 2.1.1) and included:

- the short-term nature of provision;
- the relevance of courses to their everyday lives; and
- for underserved communities, the targeted nature of the interventions they engaged in.

The short-term nature of provision

Learners interviewed frequently explained that they had engaged in multiple courses, each varied in length. In many instances, learners had engaged in shorter courses before moving onto longer and accredited provision.

They felt that that through light-touch engagement they were able to identify courses that interested them. This gave them the confidence to engage with substantive provision and move on to other ASF funded courses with an aim to secure level 2 qualifications.

The relevance of courses to learners' everyday lives

Several learners explained that, based on their previous experiences of learning maths, they felt they were not mathematically minded and would not be able to grasp numeracy concepts. For many, this was one of the key reasons that they had avoided developing their numeracy skills.

Through contextualised numeracy however, learners explained that London Multiply had shown them that everyday numeracy was not intimidating. Instead, learners shared that they enjoyed dealing with numbers in the activities they did. Not only did this change learners' perceptions of numeracy but encouraged some to explore studying at level 2.

Some providers held 'supermarket sweeps' as one-off workshops to encourage Londoners to think about their spending and identify the best deals in supermarkets. Learners shared that these were fun, engaging events that encouraged them to take actions to reduce their weekly spending.

Targeted interventions for underserved communities and London Multiply target groups

Targeted interventions were appreciated by learners. For example, ESOL learners who learnt numeracy-focused vocabulary relevant to everyday life in London, such as banking, measurements and time considered this to be important for their transition.

Courses for care leavers explored topics around budgeting and measurements for cooking. In both instances, providers and learners shared that the course content was the key driver for their continued engagement. Learners expressed that their learning had been useful for navigating their everyday lives.

Parents also spoke positively about the courses they engaged in. The insight it gave them into the current maths curriculum and how their children are being taught was appreciated. This was particularly noted by parents who had moved to the UK from other countries.

"The way my children learn here in the UK is different to how I was taught [in Pakistan]. I struggle to answer their questions. I thought they can't learn any differently, but I can. I'm an adult."

London Multiply learner

3.2.4 Challenges securing engagement

Although providers felt London Multiply had an overall positive effect on learner engagement in numeracy provision, there were challenges in recruiting Londoners. This was notable among London Multiply target groups and underserved communities.

Providers shared the following information on specific target groups:

- Refugees and asylum seekers frequently relocating had negative effects on their ability to fully engage in courses
- Londoners experiencing homelessness often appeared distracted during classes and missed sessions for viewings and housing appointments
- Low-wage earners could not always align changing working schedules with classes and had to prioritise work over learning
- Specifically with online courses, learners with lower levels of digital literacy were not always able to fully contribute to sessions.

Despite providers taking various approaches to minimising these challenges, there was a continuing difficulty securing commitment to longer-term courses.

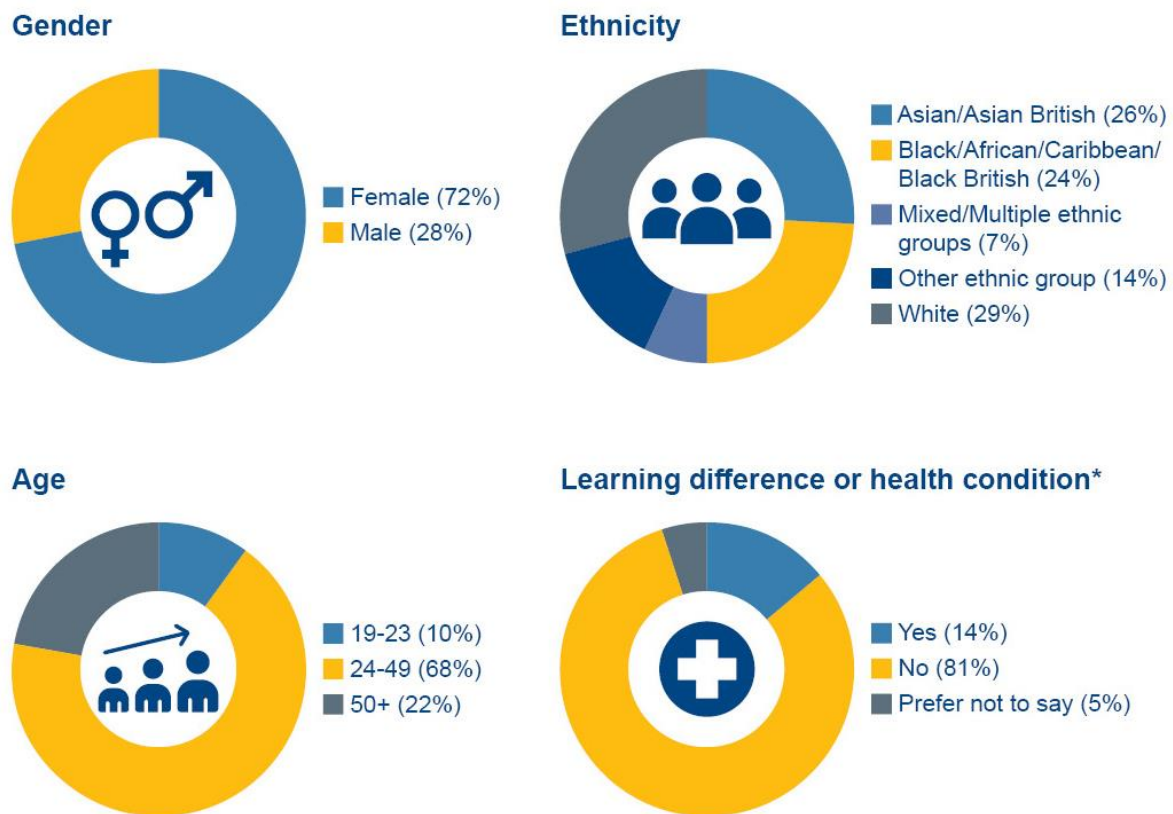
3.3 Who engaged in London Multiply?

3.3.1 Learner demographics

GLA analysis of ILR data demonstrates London Multiply's ability to engage learners from a diverse range of groups. In total, 40,600 learners enrolled on substantive provision across London¹⁴. Figure 6 displays London Multiply learner demographics.

¹⁴ ILR data only captures information pertaining to substantive provision (i.e. provision lasting more than 2 hours). Therefore, the number of enrolments will have been higher than outlined, and therefore the actual demographic breakdown of learners may be slightly different than presented.

Figure 6: London Multiply learner demographics



Source: GLA analysis of ILR data (DfE, FE and Skills), 2025.

Base: 40,600 learners.

* Learner considers themselves to have a health condition and/or disability and/or learning difficulty

Note: Includes learners on London Multiply courses between August 2022 and January 2025

Note: ILR data only includes data pertaining to substantive provision. Therefore, learner demographics across both non-substantive and substantive London Multiply provision may be different.

Further analysis exploring intersectional identities identified that:

- only 7% of female learners were aged 19-23, compared with 19% of male learners;
- among female learners, 28% were from Asian or Asian British backgrounds, compared to 22% of male learners;
- conversely, 29% of male learners were from Black/African/Caribbean/Black British backgrounds, compared to 22% of female learners; and
- learners from Black/African/Caribbean/Black British backgrounds make up over one-third (34%) of learners aged 19-23, this reduces to 25% among those 50+.

3.3.2 Engagement from underserved communities

Due to the variety of approaches to engagement and outreach, and adaptations to delivery styles, providers spoke positively about their ability to engage learners from underserved communities. In the survey, almost three-quarters (74%) of providers said that they had successfully engaged underserved communities and key London Multiply target groups.

Most often, success was attributed to working in partnership with community organisations to deliver taster sessions. The importance of these one-off sessions tailored to the needs and interests of underserved communities was reflected in the numbers of learners going on to engage in substantive provision.

"It's been magic to have that funding for non-substantive courses... once they've done that little bit of learning they're more likely to think 'oh, okay I've gotten used to you a little bit and I've given you that little bit, I can give you a little bit more' but without that these people would never, never engage."

London Multiply provider

Despite this overall success, providers were forthcoming with the challenges they experienced trying to engage underserved communities. Several providers shared that understanding what works for engaging these communities took a lot of time and involved a trial-and-error approach. As a result, some providers felt they only observed the benefits of new outreach approaches towards the end of their second year of delivery.

4 Learner outcomes

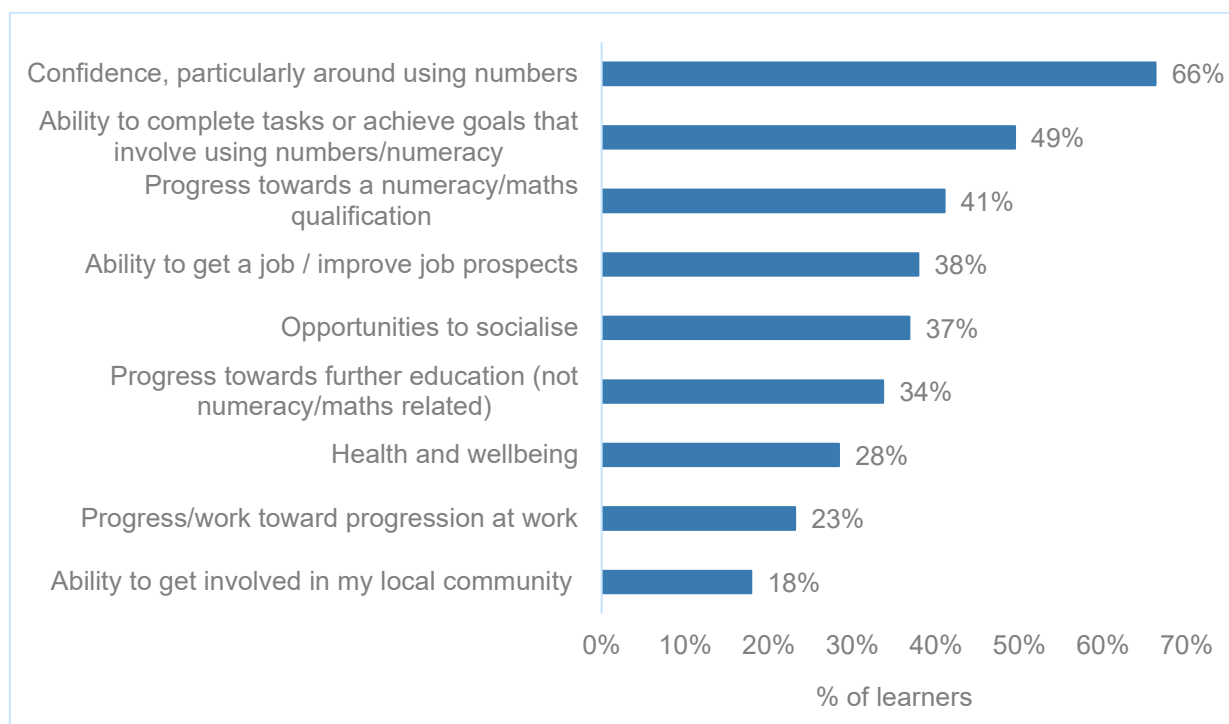
This chapter collates provider, learner and partner views on the outcomes learners achieved through London Multiply. These include personal outcomes, such as confidence, self-efficacy and health and wellbeing; social outcomes; progression into further education; and employment outcomes.

Chapter summary

- **Greater confidence was a key outcome**, reported by 66% of learners, and extended beyond confidence using numbers. Learners reported increased confidence in their ability to continue in education, navigate everyday life in London and access work.
- **Improved financial literacy** allowed several learners to review and change their spending habits to reduce their living costs. Additionally, some reported a better understanding of their tax, national insurance and pension contributions.
- The **opportunities to socialise** that London Multiply provision offered introduced several learners to new support networks. For many, this increased their sense of social integration. This was particularly common among learners new to living in the UK.
- Some learners reported **improved health and wellbeing** following their course(s). This was largely a result of the increased confidence and social contact that they gained through engaging with provision.
- London Multiply successfully changed learners' perspectives on continuing in education. GLA analysis of ILR data indicates that **45% of learners progressed onto other ASF courses** between 7 and 180 days after their Multiply course had ended. This included level 2 maths and Functional Skills courses, as well as other skills courses.
- Providers shared anecdotal evidence of learners **moving into employment in a range of sectors**, including health and social care, engineering and infrastructure, and education.

Figure 7 displays outcomes reported by learners in the learner survey, and shows that:

- greater confidence was the most commonly cited outcome, reported by two-thirds (66%) of learners; and
- around half (49%) of learners felt more able to complete tasks or achieve goals that involve using numbers.

Figure 7: Learner outcomes

Source: IES, 2025.

Base: 96 learners.

Note: This question was multiple choice, therefore the base and % totals more than 100% of respondents.

4.1 Confidence

London Multiply was commended for its ability to increase learners' confidence across multiple areas of their daily lives. Two-thirds of learners surveyed (66%) shared that they had noticed improvements in their confidence both while on the course and following their course. This was also the most cited outcome by providers in interviews.

Improved confidence was not limited to numbers. Instead, learners and providers noted improved confidence in abilities to:

- engage in further education and continue learning;
- navigate everyday life, including using public transport and cooking;
- access work, or improve performance at work; and
- manage money and make informed decisions when shopping.

Providers attributed this widespread increase in confidence to the stepping stone approach that was used to deliver a range of non-substantive and substantive provision. This approach created a safe space for learners that encouraged them to face their vulnerabilities and tackle negative perceptions of numeracy and adult learning.

"For me, [my experience with Multiply was] very positive because I found the confidence, more than anything, I found the confidence to just do life, and that's the first step to do what I want."

4.1.1 Confidence managing money

Courses designed to help Londoners manage their money allowed learners to understand their shopping habits in more detail. Through this they were able to understand how to save money, implement budgets and change their spending habits to reduce overall outgoings. This learning improved learners' confidence to:

- lower the cost of their weekly shop while improving their nutritional intake;
- ensure they had the best deals on their utility bills;
- understand how store credit cards and interest rates work;
- assess their outgoings to make sure they are not being overcharged or making unnecessary payments; and
- budget in a way that allows them to start contributing to savings.

"I recently had a rent increase, and I worked it out percent wise and researched what a reasonable increase would be. Mine was way higher, and I put it in a letter to my landlord and we came to a better agreement"

London Multiply learner

Employers identified that on courses they were co-delivering, staff and/or learners had a better understanding of pay, particularly around:

- their payslips, wages and overtime rates of pay; and
- tax, national insurance and pension contributions.

In these instances, employers felt that learners had a better awareness of what it is to live within their means. Some said that some staff who had taken part in provision had histories of requesting advances on wages or loans from the business. Since taking part however, the employer noted that they were offering wages in advance less frequently and observed positive changes in the way these employees presented themselves and engaged at work.

"I think a lot of people live outside their means and then they struggle as a result of that. I think with the new recruits coming through the college, they are very aware of what they're earning and what their expenditure is and making sure that they live within their means. I think that's very, very important."

Employer

4.2 Social integration and civic participation

4.2.1 Social integration

Specifically for courses delivered in-person, social integration was an important by-product of engagement in London Multiply provision. During classes, learners were able to work through tasks together. This allowed them to get to know one another and, in

many cases, identify shared experiences and understandings. These in-class interactions were able to flourish into support networks and friendships outside of the classroom, for example:

- some learners created WhatsApp and Facebook groups in classes with an aim to maintain connections beyond the course they were on; and
- parents on courses delivered in their children's schools were able to meet other parents, allowing them to share their children's progress and discuss celebrations or concerns about the school

"[I've gained] more opportunities to see other parents and become friends... we have time to talk to each other... we are getting more strong and that makes us better."

London Multiply learner

Particularly in ESOL classes, learners represented a variety of demographics and backgrounds and among them spoke several languages. Providers felt that at the start of these courses learners were withdrawn. However, through interactive sessions and classwork, learners were able to encourage one another and began to communicate more regularly during class time.

As English was the only common language within classes, providers explained that learners were able to practice more regularly. Subsequently, they noticed improvements in their language comprehension.

Some providers shared anecdotal evidence to suggest that increased social integration was encouraging learners to leave the house more regularly, positively effecting their health and wellbeing.

4.2.2 Civic participation

Civic participation was a less frequently cited outcome. In the learner survey, one-fifth of respondents (18%) said London Multiply had helped them get involved in their local community. There were some examples of learners taking up volunteer roles at colleges to support new cohorts of learners.

4.3 Health and wellbeing

Improved health and wellbeing was another commonly cited outcome by learners and providers. This was due to a combination of direct involvement in London Multiply provision and the skills that learners gained from courses. Increases in confidence, abilities to socialise and the ability to develop future plans were directly associated with improvements in learners' mental health.

"It helped me cope with certain things I was going through with my mental health, it made me feel confident, like I wasn't dwindling away anymore."

London Multiply learner

Indirectly, London Multiply provision embedded into activities such as supermarket sweeps and cooking classes has allowed learners to begin making healthier choices when shopping and preparing food. This was felt to be particularly prominent among care leavers and people new to living in the UK.

Specifically for parents, their improved ability to support their children with their schoolwork allowed them to feel like they were actively contributing to their children's development. This not only supported their own self-efficacy but resulted in them spending more time with their children and developing stronger bonds with them. In these instances, learners observed improved health and wellbeing in both themselves and their children.

"It helps me help my children. Not only do I help my children, but we help each other. It's created a bond, because we sit down and do maths together."

London Multiply learner

4.4 Skills for and progression into employment

4.4.1 Skills for employment

Progression toward employment was a key driver of learners' involvement in London Multiply provision. Across the range of interventions, learners were able to develop a range of skills and behaviours to support them to move toward and into employment. These included:

- navigating public transport;
- time planning and punctuality
- adopting healthy routines
- attention to detail; and
- improved listening skills.

"We did a session on how to get across London, how to buy the cheapest ticket and how to read a bus timetable, and we've had people who have said that's helped them get jobs because they've been able to work out that if they need to be here at this time they need to get the bus at this time, and they've been able to turn up to an interview on time."

London Multiply provider

Providers, community organisations and employers all described London Multiply as empowering for learners and observed changes in their confidence and motivation to enter work and/or progress within work. This was largely attributed to the positive shift in confidence and attitudes to education and employment that London Multiply facilitated.

4.4.2 Progression into employment

Providers do not collect employment outcome data for learners on non-accredited provision. Subsequently, information on London Multiply learners' progression into employment was based on anecdotal evidence.

Providers reported that learners have moved into a variety of sectors, including:

- Health and social care;
- engineering and infrastructure;
- education; and
- hospitality.

As a number of providers developed partnerships with NHS trusts across London, this was the sector in which employment outcomes were most commonly reported. Learners and providers praised the partnerships for facilitating easier, targeted entry routes into nursing and other health-related employment opportunities.

4.5 Progression into further learning

GLA analysis of ILR data indicates that 45% of learners progressed onto other ASF provision between 7 and 180 days after their first London Multiply course ended. Insights from the evaluation explore the changes to learner views on education, as well as the types of courses learners moved into.

4.5.1 Changes to learner views on education

As indicated throughout this report, positive changes to learners' views on education options beyond London Multiply were commonly reported. This was attributed to the programme's ability to build learners' confidence and develop clearer aspirations for their future.

Several learners shared that engaging in London Multiply had encouraged them to continue learning. Some said that they were doing other similar short courses, including other London Multiply courses and skills courses. Others had plans to enrol onto functional skills qualifications and other Level 2 courses. This was often with a view to developing skills and gaining accreditation to progress into, or within employment.

"I thought I had lost my chance to do that [learning] because of my age, and there wasn't a point in me learning anymore. But this has helped me realise that I can carry on learning."

London Multiply learner

4.5.2 Progression onto maths courses

After taking part in non-substantive provision, learners frequently shared that they wanted to progress onto other similar courses under the London Multiply umbrella. This was with a key aim to continue developing confidence and numeracy skills. They commended London Multiply's success in changing their mindset around numbers and wanted to achieve the qualifications they had missed out on earlier in life.

"Before, I wasn't very good at maths. But now I'm into it it's really interesting. I hope they continue London Multiply next year... if not I'll try and find another maths course elsewhere because maths never stops"

London Multiply learner

Some were focused specifically on obtaining GCSE maths qualifications. Others were interested in developing a rounded set of qualifications through functional skills and essential skills qualifications.

Providers described the importance of maintaining numeracy within accredited ESOL provision to facilitate progression pathways. ESOL learners who took part in embedded London Multiply provision were able to move onto Functional Skills qualifications and accredited ESOL provision sooner than providers had seen before Multiply. Both providers and learners shared that that was vital for developing their confidence and abilities to navigate life in London. This was particularly important for refugees and asylum seekers, and people who had more recently moved to the UK.

"The college has gone from having almost no entry level functional skills. This year however, we've managed to get 31 learners qualifications. That's been a huge success for us. And a lot of that is because we engaged ESOL learners in Multiply in the previous year."

London Multiply provider

4.5.3 Progression onto other provision

Several providers and learners described London Multiply acting as a gateway to other adult education courses and discussed the non-maths routes learners took after their courses. Learners explained that conversations with their teachers and student support services provided knowledge and insight into the full range of opportunities available to them.

It made me want to study again. I hadn't studied in such a long time, and when I turned 40 I started going through menopause and that made me feel like my brain was slowing down, I was getting a lot of brain fog. But instead of giving in to it, I wanted to learn new things

London Multiply learner

Providers delivering courses in the community in particular noted an increase in enrolments onto courses delivered on-site. They attributed this to the fact that community organisations are trusted and familiar to Londoners. This echoed survey responses which indicated that four-fifths (80%) of providers said that partnerships had created new referrals into ASF provision.

Some of the subject areas that providers said London Multiply facilitated access to included:

- Nursing;
- accounting;
- business management;

- IT and data management;
- education; and
- health and social care.

5 Conclusions, recommendations and limitations

This final chapter sets out the key conclusions from the evaluation findings and discusses recommendations to secure the legacy of London Multiply.

5.1 Conclusions

By collating the views of providers, learners, community organisations and employers, this evaluation report summarises the experiences of delivering and engaging in London Multiply provision.

Overall, **experiences of the programme were largely positive:**

- **Providers commended the freedom London Multiply gave them** to trial new approaches and engage learners in innovative ways. The roundtables organised by the GLA were particularly useful for sharing learning and good practice.
- Community organisations felt that the **new and improved partnerships with providers** that London Multiply facilitated allowed them to contribute to the design of courses tailored to the needs of the communities they support.
- **Employers were able to identify new talent pipelines** and establish partnerships with providers to create access to employment for those on relevant courses.
- **Learners enjoyed the courses they took part in**, and for many it had encouraged them to continue learning or enter/progress within employment.

The **programme's success was attributed to its non-intimidating format**, achieved through three key means:

- **taking provision to local communities** by running sessions in community spaces;
- **offering non-substantive provision** in the form of taster sessions and one-off workshops; and
- **embedding numeracy into other courses**, such as ESOL, digital skills and recreational courses, such as crafts and cooking.

These approaches to delivery **appeared to encourage uptake of provision among groups of Londoners who would typically have not engaged in adult education**. This included the key London Multiply target groups of parents and care leavers, as well as underserved communities.

By successfully engaging a diverse range of Londoners, **London Multiply has been able to support learners to achieve a range of outcomes**, including:

- **greater confidence** using numbers, managing money, and in personal abilities to succeed in education;
- **new social and support networks**, developing individuals' social integration;
- important **skills surrounding entry to employment**, including travel planning, time management, and healthy routines;

- **progression into learning beyond London Multiply**, both maths and non-maths focused; and
- **progression into and within employment.**

Despite these successes and the range of outcomes they facilitated, **stakeholders highlighted challenges experienced** in the delivery of London Multiply:

- In addition to late commissioning from DfE the associated contract delays, a national shortage of numeracy teachers, coupled with negative perceptions of numeracy among provider workforces, contributed to **delays in getting provision off the ground.**
- Provider **capacity to develop and maintain partnerships with community organisations was limited** so they had to take a 'scattergun' rather than a strategic approach, which hampered success.
- Community organisations and employers experienced similar challenges connecting with providers, feeling that some **providers could be rigid in where, when and how provision is delivered.**
- **Learners were not always able to identify up to date course or contact information**, delaying enrolment and causing some to feel they were falling behind and discouraging engagement.

5.2 Recommendations

The evaluation of London Multiply highlights key areas of success within programme delivery, and areas for further development in wider ASF provision. The following recommendations build on key lessons identified throughout the report and are essential considerations for future ASF provision.

Recommendations for the GLA

- Establish mechanisms (or enhance existing mechanisms) to **facilitate relationships between providers, community organisations and employers** and evaluate their effectiveness.
- Consider how the delivery of bespoke essential numeracy skills **courses for roles in key London sectors can be incentivised** to support recruitment.
- **Explore how strategies for engaging employers in adult learning could be improved.** This could include ensuring employers have a single, trusted point of contact about all GLA skills initiatives including, for example, adult education opportunities, apprenticeships and the Good Work standard. This would help to build trust and confidence in providers among employers.
- **Identify how forums similar to the London Multiply roundtables can be replicated more widely** to support the design and delivery of other ASF provision and programmes. There would be value in these sessions being in-person to help maintain the engagement and commitment that has been secured during Multiply.
- Assess the feasibility of **expanding free continuing professional development for the Further Education workforce** to include courses that can build confidence within the workforce to deliver essential skills provision.

Recommendations for providers

- With support from the GLA, **work to ensure non-substantive, non-accredited provision remains available beyond London Multiply**. This includes taster sessions and short workshops that provide entry routes to adult learning.
- Continue to **embed numeracy and other essential skills provision into wider provision** such as ESOL and recreational learning, as well as courses closely linked to employment opportunities, such as health and social care.
- **Identify how careers information, advice and guidance can be embedded into other ASF courses** to capitalise on the positive shift in confidence and attitude to employment that London Multiply facilitated.
- Providers should **prioritise engaging with community organisations** in order to promote adult education opportunities and create new referral and progression pathways for learners from underserved communities.
- **Prioritise having up-to-date, accessible enrolment and course information online**. This is currently not consistently in place and is likely to be preventing some Londoners from accessing adult learning.
- **Ensure a greater mixture of on-site and online provision** in order to boost accessibility of provision for underserved communities and key target groups.

Appendix 1: List of Multiply interventions

Table 3: List of 10 Multiply interventions

Intervention	Intervention title
A	Courses designed to increase confidence with numbers for those needing the first steps towards formal numeracy qualifications.
B	Courses designed to help people manage their money.
C	Innovative numeracy programmes delivered together with employers – including courses designed to cover specific numeracy skills required in the workplace.
D	Courses aimed at people who can't apply for certain jobs because of a lack of numeracy skills and/or to encourage people to upskill in numeracy in order to access a certain job/career.
E	New intensive and flexible numeracy courses targeted at people without level 2 maths, leading to a Functional Skills Qualification.
F	Courses for parents wanting to increase their numeracy skills in order to help their children, and their own progression.
G	Numeracy courses aimed at prisoners, those recently released from prison or on temporary licence.
H	Numeracy courses aimed at those 19 or over that are leaving, or have just left, the care system.
I	Numeracy activities, courses or provision developed in partnership with community organisations and other partners aimed at engaging the hardest to reach learners – for examples, those not in the labour market or other groups identified locally as in need.
J	Additional relevant maths modules embedded into other vocational courses.

Source: Department for Education, 2023

Appendix 2: Summary of case study fieldwork

Across 9 case studies insights were captured through:

- 13 interviews with staff overseeing the delivering and coordination of London Multiply provision
- 15 interviews with delivery staff
- 8 learner focus groups (with a total of 47 learners)
- 7 observations of London Multiply sessions.

The characteristics of providers who took part in case studies is displayed below.

Table 4: Characteristics of providers across case study research

Provider characteristic	Total in sample
Provider type	9
Local Authority	4
College / other FE provider	5
Funding allocation	9
£100-499k	4
£500-999k	2
£1m+	3
Interventions	
A	9
B	8
C	4
D	8
E	2
F	7
G	0
H	1
I	6
J	0

Source: IES, 2025

Inclusive Terminology

The terminology used to define ethnicity continues to evolve, and greater awareness has arisen about gender, cognitive differences as well as of disability. IES seeks to be a learning organisation; as such we are adapting our practice in line with these shifts. We aim to be specific when referring to each individual's ethnicity and use their own self-descriptor wherever possible. Where this is not feasible, we are aligned with Race Disparity Unit (RDU) which uses the term 'ethnic minorities' to refer to all ethnic groups except white British. RDU does not use the terms BAME (black, Asian, and minority ethnic) or BME (black and minority ethnic) as these terms emphasise certain ethnic groups and exclude others. It also recommends not capitalising ethnic groups, (such as 'black' or 'white') unless that group's name includes a geographic place. More broadly, we understand that while individuals may have impairments it is society that disables them, hence we refer to disabled people. Not all people identify with male or female and we reflect their self-descriptions in our work and use the term non-binary should abbreviation be necessary. We value neurodiversity. Where possible we always use people's self-descriptors rather than impose categories upon them.

Accessibility

IES seeks to make its .pdf reports as accessible as possible and is a member of UKAAF (UK Association of Accessible Formats). Every effort is made to make our PDF reports meet the required accessibility standards, should you encounter any difficulty in accessing the information in our reports please contact: accessibility@employment-studies.co.uk