



Department
for Education

verian 

Multiply case studies

**Multiply evaluation: Synthesised
findings from local area case studies**

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Executive summary

This report draws on findings from two waves of case study research undertaken with twenty Multiply local delivery areas across England, as part of the wider evaluation of the Multiply programme. It captures key themes, learnings and recommendations from all twenty case studies, as well as detailed summaries of findings from six of the case studies, which together provide a valuable picture of the range of delivery models, contexts, experiences, and impacts reported across the programme. It provides an in-depth view of the Multiply programme at a local level, focusing on planning, set-up, and implementation by local delivery teams. This report underpins and sits alongside the final evaluation report, with wider findings from this case study research used to inform the final evaluation report.

Topline themes and key findings

Verian collaborated with DfE to purposively select local areas for the case studies. A range of criteria were used to ensure a spread of different types of local areas, including: the level of administration (i.e. combined authority, local authority); size of funding allocation; geographic region; intervention target audiences; whether they deliver Adult Education Budget (AEB) provision, and, for wave 1 case studies, the number of substantive learners in the first full quarter of programme delivery (Q3 of financial year 2022-2023). Fieldwork was undertaken in two waves; one at the end of the first year of Multiply delivery and one at the end of the programme.

Across the case studies, consistent themes emerged that speak to the broader experience of delivering Multiply.

Strategic alignment and local responsiveness

- **Multiply's flexibility enabled local areas to tailor provision to specific local needs.** This included one-to-one support, incentives to encourage participation, embedded numeracy in ESOL, family learning, integration with other services (e.g. foodbanks, parenting support) and amplified community wellbeing strategies. In the North East Combined Authority (NECA), for example, Multiply was targeted at foodbank users and Maths embedded in ESOL delivery – something they had not previously been able to make work using AEB funding.
- **Several areas noted that Multiply had helped to elevate the profile of adult numeracy within their broader skills strategies,** which created new momentum for cross-departmental collaboration (e.g. between employment, health, and education teams).
- **Where employer engagement had worked, it often involved reframing Multiply as a wellbeing or retention initiative** rather than a training programme. For example, some NHS trusts positioned Multiply as part of their staff wellbeing offer.

Learner outcomes

- **Stakeholders felt that Multiply had achieved strong outcomes in improving confidence for learners and reducing maths anxiety.** This included improvements in practical skills such as budgeting and money management, as well as broader confidence among learners in handling everyday numerical tasks.
- **Several areas reported Multiply facilitating progression into further numeracy courses,** including Functional Skills, GCSE level, and sector-specific maths courses.
- **Multiply was seen to have had ripple effects beyond numeracy,** particularly in the case study areas involved in the second wave of the research. These stakeholders reported that learners often gained digital skills, improved English, or developed greater confidence in navigating public services. Areas also reported clear evidence of learners progressing into further employment opportunities as a result of Multiply.
- **Some areas saw Multiply act as a catalyst for wider community engagement,** with reports that learners went on to volunteer, join local groups, or support their children's learning more actively.
- In addition to the above outcomes, stakeholders felt that Multiply also drove wider benefits particularly around social value, improved career prospects, and long-term sustained increases to numeracy confidence. However, these were said to be difficult to account for in the short-term and were expected to only fully materialise later.

Reaching learners and building trust

- **Multiply was believed to be particularly effective in reaching learners who had previously disengaged from formal education due to negative school experiences.** Some stakeholders noted that the informal, non-judgemental tone of Multiply courses helped rebuild learners' confidence and sense of belonging.
- **Peer-led models** (such as prison champions or community ambassadors), where they had been used as part of Multiply delivery, were felt to be especially powerful in building trust and encouraging participation among marginalised groups.

Innovation in engagement and learning

- **Multiply was felt to have enabled experimentation across case study areas** - in course content, as well as course format and delivery. Some areas trialled drop-in models, digital-first approaches, or co-delivery with health and wellbeing services.

- **The use of incentives** (e.g. vouchers, refreshments, childcare), where these had been used as part of delivery, was cited as a key enabler of engagement, particularly for learners facing financial or logistical barriers.
- **Some local areas used Multiply to pilot new commissioning models.** This included micro-grants to grassroots organisations and co-design with community partners. This helped build delivery capacity in areas with limited adult learning infrastructure.

Value for money delivered by Multiply

- **Broad consensus on value for money delivered by Multiply.** Stakeholders across areas felt that Multiply represented good value for money. This was driven primarily by the outcomes it achieved for learners, particularly engagement with those who would not have accessed adult learning otherwise, and because the funding generally covered delivery costs effectively.
- Some stakeholders noted that the time-intensive set up requirements in Year 1 had limited the value for money at that point, but the outcomes achieved in Year 2 and 3 helped to address this.
- Proactive performance management and reallocation of funding amongst providers, where required, was noted as key to delivering good value for money. This was noted particularly amongst larger delivery areas such as the GLA. This helped ensure that underspend was minimised and that funding was given to providers with proven delivery capability.

Comparison to AEB courses

- **Multiply was widely seen across local areas as complementary to AEB provision,** as it offered a more flexible, informal, and community-based approach to adult numeracy. Stakeholders across most local areas emphasised Multiply's success in its ability to reach hard-to-engage learners - particularly those with low confidence or maths anxiety - through tailored, practical courses.
- **Multiply was also valued as a stepping stone to more formal learning,** as it helped learners build confidence before progressing to AEB-funded qualifications. This was particularly evident in Greater London Authority (GLA), Cornwall, and Derby, where stakeholders described Multiply as a gateway to further education.

Experience of working with DfE

- **Stakeholders generally reported positive relationships with their DfE contacts,** and cited responsiveness, flexibility and collaborative problem-solving as key features of this engagement. For example, Cornwall Council, Gloucestershire, and Liverpool praised their DfE representatives for being accessible and supportive.

- **There were recurring frustrations around missed opportunities for national promotion and guidance.** Several areas – including NECA, GLA, and Isles of Scilly (CIOS) – highlighted the absence of a national communication campaign and best practice resources at the start of the programme as barriers to learner engagement.
- **Some stakeholders noted systemic challenges in managing DfE funding** across different financial and academic years, which complicated reporting and coordination.
- **A major concern across most local area case studies in wave 2 of the research was the lack of clarity on funding beyond March 2025,** which hindered long-term planning and created uncertainty for staff retention and programme continuity. Stakeholders in both local areas and delivery partners expressed worry about the sustainability of Multiply-style provision without continued investment. Many feared losing staff and momentum, particularly in smaller organisations that had come to rely on Multiply funding. There was a strong consensus that demand for community-based numeracy support remains high, and that future funding should build on Multiply’s successes rather than allow them to dissipate.

Learnings and recommendations

The following section provides a synthesis of learnings and recommendations, drawn from the twenty local area case studies conducted between June 2022 and February 2025.

Delivery and innovation

Multiply's flexible, community-based approach successfully engaged new learners – particularly those who were considered harder-to-reach. These courses were particularly successful when embedded in everyday life and delivered in informal settings. Short, practical sessions and incentives also helped to build participation.

Barriers to implementation

Attempts to engage employers yielded inconsistent results, with success dependent on strong local relationships and tailored course design. Some local areas also lacked the capacity or experience to deliver effectively on Multiply, highlighting the need for upfront support from DfE and increased peer learning.

Learner impact

Multiply boosted learner confidence and reduced maths anxiety, especially through non-accredited, low-pressure courses. It effectively bridged informal learning and formal qualifications.

Administrative learnings

Short-term funding and complex administrative processes limited long-term planning and accessibility for the programme. These challenges were particularly acute for learners with additional needs and local areas that managed multiple providers or small providers.

National infrastructure and support

The programme lacked national visibility and the digital platform initially planned¹. Stronger national promotion, increased sharing of best practice, and investment in digital access, especially in rural areas, would have enhanced delivery.

¹ The Multiply programme initially planned to include an online platform. In December 2023 DfE informed local areas that a UK-wide digital platform would not progress, and the focus would remain on supporting local areas to ensure that Multiply was delivered in a way that best meets local needs.

The table on the next page provides a more detailed summary of the learning and recommendations that emerged through this research.

Table 1: Learnings and recommendations: Delivery and innovation

What was the learning?	What is the recommendation?	Relevant for
Multiply enabled creative, community-based delivery that reached new learners.	Local areas with strong community networks should continue to invest in partnerships with grassroots organisations to maintain reach and trust.	Government, Local areas
Multiply enabled creative, community-based delivery that reached new learners.	Local areas should engage community organisations (e.g. community arts spaces, faith-based community hubs, housing trusts or homeless support charities, refugee centres, mental health and wellbeing services, foodbanks and job centres), through events or in-person visits, to increase buy-in for delivery.	Local areas
Multiply enabled creative, community-based delivery that reached new learners.	Using a dedicated community engagement officer, either employed internally or through a partnership organisation, can be effective when managing relationships with community groups.	Local areas
Multiply's flexibility allowed for innovation, but some providers were slow to adapt.	Provide clearer guidance on the expectations of the programme at the outset, and examples of innovative practice early in programme rollout, to inspire confidence and creativity.	Government
Multiply's flexibility allowed for innovation, but some providers were slow to adapt.	Offer peer learning opportunities between local areas and providers to share successful models. For example, create learning networks for specific areas of Multiply delivery, e.g., a network of local area communication leads to share marketing resources and learner engagement techniques to better disseminate effective practices and reduce duplication of effort on the scheme.	Government, Local areas

What was the learning?	What is the recommendation?	Relevant for
Multiply was most effective when embedded in everyday life (e.g. budgeting, cooking).	Embed numeracy in everyday activities to bring down barriers to learning. Learning therefore feels more relevant, less intimidating, and more engaging.	Local areas
Multiply was most effective when embedded in everyday life (e.g. budgeting, cooking).	Encourage providers to co-design courses with learners and community groups to ensure relevance and relatability.	Government, Local areas
Multiply was most effective when embedded in everyday life (e.g. budgeting, cooking).	Delivering courses in community settings (e.g., local churches, libraries, community centres) drives learner engagement by reducing the formality of the courses, making the experience less daunting for learners.	Local areas
Shorter interventions have been effective when initially engaging learners.	Shorter, bite-sized, interventions allow local areas to build rapport with learners and provide them with an initial understanding of Multiply courses and other adult education or support offers.	Local areas
Shorter interventions have been effective when initially engaging learners.	Using induction sessions to introduce the course before going into practical applications can also help learners understand the context and benefits of the course, which could lead to better engagement and address any reservations or concerns they may have.	Local areas
The use of incentives as part of course delivery can encourage attendance and improve learner engagement.	Using practical incentives, that directly link to course delivery/content, can increase engagement (e.g. providing cooking equipment as part of courses that focused on using maths during cooking or whiteboard pens and maths teaching resources during a Multiply course delivered to teaching assistants).	Local areas

Table 1: Learnings and recommendations: Barriers to implementation

What was the learning?	What is the recommendation?	Relevant for
Employer engagement was inconsistent and often difficult to sustain.	Where employer relationships are strong, co-designing bespoke numeracy courses to the role of employees is effective (e.g. NHS medication management).	Government, Local areas
Employer engagement was inconsistent and often difficult to sustain.	In areas with limited employer engagement, focus on sectors with clear numeracy needs (e.g. care, construction) and offer flexible, on-site delivery.	Government, Local areas
Employer engagement was inconsistent and often difficult to sustain.	Use testimonials and marketing content with tutors and learners to promote courses more personally to employers, with real-life imagery rather than stock photography.	Local areas
Some local areas lacked the internal capacity or experience to deliver Multiply effectively.	For local areas with limited adult education infrastructure, Government should provide more upfront support, including templates, training, and peer mentoring.	Government
Some local areas lacked the internal capacity or experience to deliver Multiply effectively.	In-person programme meetings between local areas and delivery partners can facilitate learning for local area stakeholders – particularly when they may have less experience reaching new, harder-to-reach, learners.	Government, Local areas

Table 2: Learnings and recommendations: Learner impact

What was the learning?	What is the recommendation?	Relevant for
Multiply helped build learner confidence and reduce maths anxiety.	Retain non-accredited, 'low stakes', engagement-focussed learning pathways in future adult numeracy programmes.	Government
Courses that embed numeracy in everyday life were more effective at attracting learners.	Introducing maths embedded in other engaging courses can help in attracting learners and reduce maths anxiety. Promoting Multiply-style courses as being similar to maths classes at school can turn learners away.	Government, Local areas
Multiply filled a gap between informal learning and formal qualifications.	Sustain Multiply-style provision as a bridge to AEB-funded qualifications, especially for learners with low confidence or complex needs.	Government, Local areas
Multiply filled a gap between informal learning and formal qualifications.	In areas with high ESOL populations, integrate numeracy into ESOL provision to support dual progression.	Government, Local areas

Table 3: Learnings and recommendations: Administrative learnings

What was the learning?	What is the recommendation?	Relevant for
Multiply's short funding cycles limited strategic planning and sustainability.	Provide multi-year funding commitments to allow for long-term planning, staff retention, and relationship-building.	Government
Multiply's short funding cycles limited strategic planning and sustainability.	Encourage local areas to embed Multiply-style delivery into their broader adult learning strategies to ensure legacy.	Local areas
Administrative and data collection burdens were a barrier, and could hinder engagement for certain learners	Simplify paperwork for learners with additional needs (e.g. ESOL, SEND) and allow for verbal or assisted completion.	Government
Administrative and data collection burdens were a barrier, and could hinder engagement for certain learners	For local areas with many small providers, provide more flexibility with the use of the administrative budget on Multiply, allowing areas, where necessary, to spend more than 10% of their budget on the administrative budget (as some local areas reflected that a 10% admin budget was insufficient).	Government

Table 4: Learnings and recommendations: National infrastructure and support

What was the learning?	What is the recommendation?	Relevant for
National promotion and digital infrastructure were lacking.	Future programmes should include a national awareness campaign and the creation of a national-level bank of resources to boost awareness and improve delivery.	Government
National promotion and digital infrastructure were lacking.	In rural or remote areas, invest in digital access and blended learning models to improve reach.	Government

1. Introduction

This report shares findings from two waves of case study research undertaken with twenty Multiply local delivery areas across England, as part of the wider evaluation of the Multiply programme. It provides an in-depth view of the Multiply programme at a local level, focusing on planning, set-up, and implementation by local delivery teams. This report underpins and sits alongside the final evaluation report, with findings from this case study research used to inform the final evaluation report. The insights drawn from these case studies are intended to highlight both strategic and operational learnings from the Multiply programme for the Department for Education (DfE), providers, local areas, practitioners and wider sector stakeholders.

1.1. Overarching evaluation aims:

- To provide an in-depth view of the approaches adopted by local areas to the planning, set-up, and implementation of the Multiply programme.
- To evaluate how effectively those involved in Multiply think it is being delivered and how this could be improved, to enhance delivery in the latter years of the programme.
- To summarise lessons learned and identify best practices, especially at the local level, to feed into the evidence base and inform future delivery and interventions.

1.2. Reading this report

This report is structured into eight main chapters. Chapter 2 outlines the methodology, while Chapters 3 to 8 outline the findings from six of the wave 2 case study areas. The findings from the other fourteen case study areas have been used to inform the topline summary and learnings and recommendations section of this report and the final Multiply programme evaluation report.

Verian collaborated with DfE to purposively select local areas for the case studies. Fieldwork was undertaken in two waves; one at the end of the first year of Multiply delivery and one at the end of the programme.

Six of the 20 case studies are written up in full in this report, but insights from all case studies inform the key learnings and recommendations. These case study areas were selected because they provide a valuable picture on the range of different delivery models, contexts, experiences, and impacts that were reported by local areas across the Multiply programme. Further information on sampling can be found in Appendix A and Appendix B.

2. Methods

2.1. Fieldwork approach

A case study approach was used to explore the delivery of the Multiply programme within each local area. In total, Verian carried out two waves of case study research with twenty Multiply local delivery areas.²

Wave 1

Verian conducted six local area case studies in the first year of the Multiply evaluation, with up to 10 hours of interviews at each local area and covered a range of stakeholders involved in delivering the programme, including providers. The learnings from these interviews were integrated into an internal report shared with DfE in 2023, used to inform amendments to grant delivery processes.

Wave 2

As programme delivery became established, and the end of the three-year funding period for the Multiply programme approached, Verian and DfE purposively selected a further 14 case study areas. These included a mix of various agreed-upon characteristics (e.g., size, Multiply budget, MCA/LA). Each case study involved semi-structured interviews and review of background documents.

Individual or group semi-structured interviews

Individual or group semi-structured interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams or in person, lasting between forty-five and ninety minutes. Interviews were conducted between June 2022 and February 2025, with each local area having up to ten hours of interview time allocated. Larger areas, such as Mayoral Combined Authorities, tended to have more interviews given the range of staff involved in delivering the programme.

Two topic guides were designed for these individual or group sessions. One was designed for the strategic lead and another for the delivery team. The strategic lead guide captured the strategic objectives of the programme in the local context. It also explored programme delivery at an overarching level to identify any learnings and insights for future rounds as well as any additional support needs required in the future.

The delivery team guide captured the experience of the design and set-up phases of the programme. It also explored programme delivery from different roles and perspectives to

² Multiply local delivery areas represent to geographic regions in the UK where the Multiply programme was implemented. These areas will be referred to as 'local areas' throughout the remainder of the report.

identify any learnings and insights for future rounds as well as any additional support needs required in the future. The guide was designed to be used flexibly with indications of which questions apply to participants' roles and responsibilities.

Review of background documents and programme materials

During these interviews, researchers also collected key documents from local areas, particularly those related to Value for Money (VfM), financial assurance, and communications/outreach. These documents are referenced where relevant within specific case study chapters throughout this report. The review included documents such as the Multiply Investment Plan, communication/marketing materials, and any relevant policy documents provided by the different local areas.

2.2. Participant recruitment

Once the case study areas were selected, DfE contacted Multiply leads within each local area to invite them to take part in the case study research. The DfE then provided leads' names and contact details to Verian. The research team liaised with the leads directly to arrange interviews and collated the contact details of other participants for the case study area (snowballing recruitment). To allow for flexibility across different local contexts, there was no fixed requirement regarding the number of participants per case study area or specific individuals to engage with.

Participants included those involved in the local areas Multiply programme, covering areas such as strategy, project management, marketing and outreach, communications and learner engagement, commercial and contract management, data and analysis, and finance and assurance. Additionally, Verian spoke to individuals from practitioners and providers who were commissioned to deliver the Multiply courses, including those responsible for business development, college provision, community grants provision, and training/teaching. There was no incentive offered for participation.

3. Cornwall Council case study

3.1. Case study context

Fieldwork for the Cornwall Council case study was completed between the 23rd of October and the 8th of November 2024 during Year 3 of Multiply delivery. A total of seven interviews were conducted with stakeholders from the LA.

Cornwall is a rural, unitary authority, based in the Southwest of England. It had a budget of £2,452,414 during the three years of the Multiply programme, which is classified as small compared to other areas. It was also selected as a case study due to its success with employer engagement, and for being a large, rural area.

3.2. Topline summary

3.2.1. Positive impact

Multiply had an overall positive impact across Cornwall. Cornwall Council reported that a key element of this was that they delivered to a range of learners they otherwise would not have expected to reach through adult learning programmes in the area. The key to the success of the programme was the delivery of courses in an informal way and the delivery of practical content that was relatable to learners through the use of a range of real-life and work-based scenarios. Sessions were designed to be fun and enjoyable, and were often delivered in community (and not college-based) settings. This had been effective because it dealt with maths anxiety - a key barrier which had prevented many learners from engaging in learning and moving forwards with their maths and numeracy skills.

3.2.2. Recruitment of providers and learners using existing relationships

Cornwall Council had opted to appoint adult learning providers they had positive previous experience working with on other government funding streams (Cornwall College, Truro and Penwith College, Cornwall Adult Learning Service). They also worked with the Council of the Isles of Scilly (CIOS) to ensure total reach across Cornwall. The Council had opted to make these appointments, rather than go through a formal procurement process, to speed up delivery in the early days of the programme given the late start in Year 1.

Learner recruitment to Multiply courses was also led by relationships already in place with local community organisations and employers, who had direct access to the groups who would benefit most from the programme, including the hardest to reach. The delivery partners were also supported by one further partner, Seetec, appointed by Cornwall Council at the end of Year 1, to act as an 'engagement partner'. Seetec's role was purely

about driving access to learners, in which they nurtured their own relationships with community organisations and developed 'Numeracy Champions' from learners within the community settings to advocate to their peers, in order to drive access. Recruitment to Multiply was also improved in Year 2 when the Department for Education (DfE) relaxed the criteria for who could access funded provision, which allowed for funding for those who already had a Level 2 maths qualification (but who lacked the confidence to work with maths and numbers).

3.2.3. Setbacks

The one key setback in hosting Multiply was with the Council of the Isles of Scilly. They only managed to onboard two learners to the programme, both in Year 2. The CIOS felt disappointed that their hard work in the set up and promotion of the course had not paid off. CIOS believed the small population of the islands, coupled with a lack of interest in wanting to improve numeracy skills among the local population limited registrations. CIOS also noted that DfE's decision to not progress the digital platform for course provision had negatively impacted engagement.

3.2.4. End of funding

Partners anticipated the majority of course delivery would cease when Multiply funding ended. However, the nursing content, developed for the NHS through Truro and Penwith College will be passed on to those leading the nursing courses, so they can continue to deliver the effective and innovative course content where needed.

3.3. Strategic overview

This section outlines a brief background to Cornwall Council and the area they operate within, as well as stakeholder feedback on Multiply's programme design.

3.3.1. Background to local area

Cornwall Council covers mainland Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly in Southwest England, with a combined population of around 600,000 residents. The council gained devolved powers for adult education in 2025 (after the end of the Multiply programme). The area's economy benefits from tourism and agriculture, but deprivation levels vary, with rural and coastal communities facing particular barriers to education and employment opportunities.

3.3.2. Multiply alignment with wider strategic objectives

With Cornwall having areas of very high deprivation across the county, Cornwall Council saw Multiply as a great opportunity to offer something alternative to what was already on offer in the county, and that they could not do within the realms of any Adult Education

Budget (AEB) and Adult Skills Funded programmes.³ The Council liked that Multiply provided a different style of approach in learning, which they hoped would be beneficial and upskill those who needed and could benefit from it most. The council also felt Multiply aligned well with some of the other courses on offer through the local colleges and Adult Education team and could act as a good first step towards studying them in the future.

3.3.3. Stakeholder feedback on design

Flexibility

Everyone interviewed agreed that the flexible and non-formal nature of Multiply enabled them to run courses differently (and effectively) to a new cohort of learners that were otherwise unreachable. Delivery partners appreciated the freedom and resource available to trial approaches to learning and adapt as needed.

Funding arrangements

The Council and delivery partners shared frustration that the funding from any year could not be carried over into other years. This meant that the delivery in each year was more focused on the spending of the grant money, rather than having a better value 3-year programme approach.

Digital platform

When Multiply was initially promoted to delivery partners, the DfE suggested they would produce an online platform which included courses and information, and run a national communications campaign, but this did not take place. The Council of the Isles of Scilly was disappointed these did not come to fruition and felt both the platform and the campaign would have helped to support and drive interest for those on the islands and would have opened more opportunities for learning via the portal. The Council have been promoting some of the mainland Cornish online courses to their residents, but they have had no way of tracking participation.

3.4. Programme set-up

3.4.1. Partner engagement

Given Multiply's late start in Year 1, Cornwall Council felt a recruitment and selection process for delivery providers would have taken up too much time and resource. The Council therefore decided to contact their three main grant funded education providers across the county, who they already had good working relationships

³ The Adult Skills Fund was previously known as the Adult Education Budget and is a government funded programme designed to support adults aged 19 and over to gain skills for employment, further education, and personal development.

with (Cornwall College, Truro & Penwith College and Cornwall Adult Education).⁴ In addition, the Council brought in the Council of the Isles of Scilly to ensure inclusion of all the Cornish population. All organisations had to produce a bid, detailing what they would do, and the grant needed to deliver this.

With surplus grant budget available after receiving bids from the above organisations, Cornwall Council also brought in Seetec (a skills and training organisation – although for the purposes of Multiply, they did not do any course delivery) that supported the sourcing of community based, harder to reach learners. Seetec’s own personal network of community organisations was useful and meant they referred any newly found learners onto the most relevant delivery partner for one of their Multiply courses.

3.4.2. Employer engagement

Both of the colleges had success with running Multiply for local employers, who they already had existing relationships with. However, uptake only took off midway through Year 2, as it took time to liaise with the employers and to work together to create an appropriate course for their employees. Uptake was also helped by the rule change that Multiply could be completed by those who already had a Level 2 Maths qualification, which opened the course to employees who had lost confidence with, or understanding of their maths skills over time.

Cornwall College ran courses with three employers they already had a good working relationship with: Pendennis Super Yachts; Cornwall Manufacturing Company; and Plymouth Argyle Community Trust. Courses were run from their workspaces and timings were tailored to best meet the needs of the learners. In some cases, this led to Saturday morning courses. Lessons were developed in line with the context of the companies to ensure they were as relevant and useful for their employees.

“Having a tailored approach (has) been really beneficial, especially with the employers. Having the initial meeting pre-delivery, understanding what resources will best fit and adapting where needed.” - *Provider (Cornwall College)*

Truro and Penwith College have been running a successful Multiply programme with the local NHS, enabled by the close geographical proximity of both organisations. As a result of the courses, the NHS have seen improved career

⁴ Cornwall Adult Education are Cornwall Council’s adult education service, however, were treated as a separate entity from the Cornwall Council’s Employment & Skills Project Strategy Team who were overseeing Multiply delivery, as it was a different team / department.

progression amongst their employees. In partnership, the College and NHS created a few specialised Multiply courses:

- Multiply for those who wanted to become a nurse or nurse associate but did not have a Level 2 maths qualification.
- Multiply for trainee nurses who had a Level 2 maths qualification but had maths anxiety. This course led to the development of a very tailored session within the Multiply course called 'Medicines Management', based on prescriptions and converting milligrams to grams. This acted as a taster to the module of the same name in the Nursing degree. When it first ran, 20 signed up, but 45 attended, confirming the need to run it.

"Despite all 45 attendees having already achieved their Level 2 maths in the past 5-10 years, they were all petrified of it, and petrified of the fact they'd got onto a nursing course but had to do maths within it. But our Medicines Management course went like rocket fire, everybody loved it." - *Provider (Truro and Penwith College)*

Truro and Penwith College also ran courses for small business owners and sole traders, about tax for small businesses. Some of the cohort had been signposted via Seetec. 'Tips for Tax' ran at the local rugby club.

Despite their best efforts, the colleges were unable to bring Multiply to any employers they did not already work with. Employers did not want to give away valuable work time and were unable to see the value running Multiply would have in their workplace. Their priority was to ensure their workforces were compliant with any quality and health and safety standards. Maths training did not equate to compliance and was therefore not a priority for them.

3.4.3. Target audience selection

Cornwall Council focused on outreach to residents who would benefit from the Multiply programme that would not typically explore any form of adult education. These learners were often harder to reach. As the programme evolved, the need for it became even more apparent for the region.

Learner types who benefited from courses from mainland Cornish delivery partners include:

- Employers
- Parents

- Aspiring teaching assistants
- NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training)
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners, including Ukrainians
- Care system leavers
- Small businesses and those self-employed.

Cornwall Council also worked with a range of community groups, to engage typically harder to reach groups, including learners who were:

- Foodbank users
- Citizens Advice users
- Homeless
- Ex-offenders
- Neuro-diverse
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) learners.

3.4.4. Facilitators to programme set-up

Collaboration with known providers and delivery partners

The Council made the decision to **avoid a procurement process** to bring in delivery partners for Multiply. Given the late start of the programme in Year 1, and the need to spend all Year 1 funding within the allocated year, the Council feared the time and resource needed to host an official procurement process may derail any course delivery in the first year. They opted to work with the core adult education institutions in the region, who were well known to the Cornwall Council, and trusted to deliver through experience of other government grant funded initiatives.

Existing relationships and networks also played a key role to ensuring Multiply courses got up and running across Cornwall, by:

- working with known delivery partners, familiar to Cornwall Council.
- delivery partners and Seetec using their links to community organisations and employers already known to them. This enabled them to come into the trusted community settings, talk directly potential learners about the course, and to collaborate with the organisations to develop tailored programmes more suitable to the needs of their groups.

- Seetec acting as an 'engagement partner' with a core focus on bringing in learners via their own networks and relationships in the community.

"This engagement element, we've proven it works and that it can be a benefit to have someone dedicated to engaging with organisations and referring people in." - *Provider (Seetec)*

- Learners extending networks themselves. Seetec developed a 'Numeracy Champion' programme encouraging previous Multiply learners to promote Multiply through their peers. In Year 2 for example, 47 Numeracy Champions led to 225 referrals into Multiply courses across Cornwall.

Often Multiply courses did not run directly in the college settings, but instead within the community spaces learners were already using and familiar with, and in the case of the employees, within their work premises. The impact was two-fold:

- The non-formal settings took away any potential stigma or fear of going into an official educational institution.
- Learners were already familiar with how to travel to these community spaces, and they were often easier to access for learners compared to any of the college buildings.

"It doesn't work unless you've got the local organisations inviting you in to meet all of their clients and then you start building a relationship with them." - *Provider (Truro and Penwith College)*

3.4.5 Barriers to programme set-up

The key barriers to set-up were not being able to enrol learners who already had Level 2 maths; in the case of the Council of the Isles of Scilly, no national online learning portal; and challenges engaging new partners which prevented the delivery of new courses to new cohorts of learners.

Eligibility limitations

At the start of the programme, Cornwall Council and their delivery partners faced challenges because they could not enrol learners who had already completed Level 2 maths courses. They felt that many of these individuals would have benefitted from Multiply as, with time, they had often lost their confidence when working with numbers.

These potential learners had to be turned away from the course during this period. However, after receiving feedback from stakeholders, including Cornwall Council, DfE adjusted their enrolment criteria and removed the Level 2 qualification for the programme to include those who had a Level 2 qualification but may have lost confidence with their maths. The Council felt that this has had a positive impact on engagement for their courses.

Geographic challenges

Despite their best efforts to promote the programme, the Council of the Isles of Scilly struggled to engage learners. This could in part be explained by the low population size, and a general sense of disinterest towards adult learning from the islanders, but they also had nowhere to send potential learners during the early stages of the programme. CIOS were also unable to signpost learners to any online based courses from mainland Cornwall till midway through Year 2, once they were up and running.

Disinterest from new organisations

In comparison to the success that stakeholders had when engaging organisations that they already had existing relationships with, they faced challenges engaging new organisations on Multiply. They emphasised that during promotional activity or conversations about Multiply, where no previous relationship existed, there was little or no interest from these organisations.

Furthermore, some organisations struggled to recruit the following cohorts:

Employers

Despite best efforts, the Colleges were only successful at engaging employers they already had good relationships with. Any other employers were not interested even in initial conversations, struggling to see the value of the programme.

Parents

Truro and Penwith College tried to onboard parents, but were aware schools were directly providing their own maths workshops for parents.

3.5. Programme delivery

3.5.1. Delivery model

Cornwall Council delivery model

The Cornwall Council Employment and Skills Project Strategy team oversaw the Multiply provision across Cornwall but did not carry out any direct delivery on Multiply. The Council distributed funding to their four selected delivery partners (Cornwall Adult Education

Service, Truro and Penwith College, Cornwall College and the Council of Isles of Scilly), and funded Seetec to source learners for the three core adult learning services. Across delivery partners, all interventions from A to J were delivered, but not every provider delivered all interventions.⁵

Cornwall Adult Education Service

Cornwall Adult Education Service was the Council-run adult learning department, separate to those in the Employment and Skills Project Strategy Team, who oversaw the delivery of Multiply. The Service's Multiply offer was led by their Head of Adult Education who was supported by a Delivery Team Lead and four tutors to deliver courses. They had further support internally from the Education Services Financial Claims and Enrolments teams.

As part of their delivery, the service ran three Multiply courses internally: developed around specific maths skills, with one course focused specifically on progressing onto Functional Skills Maths. Courses were typically adapted to have an individual focus, such as:

- working in a charity shop or community cafe, through how to work on a till and deal with pricing and money
- how to attend a job centre
- sector-specific courses, e.g. construction, security, nature/environment, and animal care

Three Multiply courses were also delivered in partnership with other organisations who helped to engage with learners and deliver the courses. They partnered with:

- **ECCABI** (East Cornwall Citizens Advice Bureau Initiative): worked with foodbank clients about money management, their core focus being 'Eat Well Spend Less', based on cooking and doing it more cost effectively/using slow cookers).
- **Carefree**: worked with care leavers. Courses were often delivered at a one-to-one level with this cohort, based on knowledge that severe trauma (common amongst those growing up in care) could affect their confidence and ability to engage with education.
- **Pentreath**: a mental health charity, using Multiply to help get young people into employment.

⁵ DfE designed a menu of interventions that local areas could choose from which were based on the barriers that held people back from addressing their numeracy needs. Further detail on these interventions can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67e1457fd8e313b503358ca6/WITHDRAWN_Multiply_Investment_Prospectus.pdf

Truro and Penwith College

Truro and Penwith College had a very enthusiastic and dedicated Multiply Manager who built their overall strategy, created their curriculum, nurtured the College's networks and relationships and conducted some course delivery too. They were supported by another tutor who came on board in Year 2 to deliver the courses and had additional background support from the College's Advice and Guidance Officer, and Marketing Administrator. The Business Client Manager oversaw all externally funded projects delivered by the college.

Courses typically had 10-30 learning hours and included a range of in-house developed resources to support learners and provided them with something to take home, such as workbooks, revision cards and practice tests. Similar to Cornwall College, courses were run from community spaces and employer workplaces instead of directly at the College. The College ran a range of Multiply based courses including:

- **Refresh**, refreshed maths skills to help with budgeting; help with kids; and quite general maths skills. This became popular for parents who wanted to become Teaching Assistants and anyone wanting to upskill or change career.
- **Mind the Gap**, for those who wanted to do a maths qualification, but did not know enough. This would sometimes be taught one-to-one to adapt it to help those with very specific gaps in knowledge. A specific version of this was developed for the NHS.
- **Medicines Management**, developed for the NHS and feeds into a future nursing degree module of the same name.
- **Tips for Tax**, for the self-employed.
- **Cooking on Benefits**, with Konnect Communities (ex-prisoners).

Cornwall College

Cornwall College's Multiply offer was overseen by their Head of Maths and English, who also supported course delivery as required. She was assisted in managing their offer by a Project Manager; a Maths teacher who did the majority of course delivery; a Project Outreach Officer who promoted their courses and built relationships with other organisations; and a Finance Officer who dealt with their claims.

The College ran their courses from community spaces to remove any anxiety among learners around attending a course within a formal education setting. This also negated any potential transport issues as their locality naturally made them more accessible. Similarly, employer courses ran from their workplaces was also more accessible for learners.

The College-run courses were designed to be fun in nature and supported by a range of games. Courses were heavily contextualised for each cohort to ensure content was useful

for the learner and ensured usage of illustrative diagrams throughout. Their courses included:

- an employer intervention, typically developed in partnership with the employer to ensure relevant context for the course content
- an intervention for parents
- 'Increasing Confidence', run in either 2- or 4-hour blocks
- 'Intense and Flex', run in 2-hour blocks across 3-4 sessions
- 'Employability', run in conjunction with the Job Centre and Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change, typically with learners who had no interest in doing any form of adult education. These courses could run anytime between 2-8 hours.

"Through Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change we've engaged with learners who aren't enrolled in any other education programmes, most of them don't work, and would have no interest in going to maths lessons, or engaging with any education programmes really. So it's worked really well with them." - *Provider (Cornwall College)*

Council of the Isles of Scilly

The Council of the Isles of Scilly Multiply offer was overseen by their Head of Learning, Leisure and Culture and they had tutors in place to deliver Multiply if needed. At the time of the interviews, in November 2024, they only had two known learners to Multiply, the one they directly delivered to and one who did the Truro and Penwith College self-guided course. The Council had been promoting the online offerings from the other Cornish delivery partners, but there was no way for the Head of Learning to track if any Isles of Scilly residents had enrolled or completed a course elsewhere.

Seetec

Seetec were brought on board towards the end of Year 1, due in part to surplus budget on the project. Their role, via their Outreach Officer, was to help bring in more community based and harder to reach learners to the three-core adult education delivery partners. Seetec did this predominantly through their established relationships with Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change (CN4C), Chaos Group (who were focused on working with neuro-diverse learners), Konnect (working with ex-prisoners), Pluss and Volunteer Cornwall. Their role focused purely on the promotion and identification of potential Multiply learners and they did not do any course delivery on the programme.

Seetec also developed 'Numeracy Champions' within the community settings to advocate for Multiply to their peers. This approach proved to be successful in targeting learners within the above-mentioned community organisations.

3.5.2. Programme management

Cornwall Council led a range of processes to help track and monitor the activities of their Multiply delivery partners:

- **Joint provider meetings every 6-8 weeks** for sharing updates and highlights, issues and best practice, and any information received from DfE. These were done both through Teams and face-to-face.
- **End of year individual meetings** between the Council and each provider to consider success, challenges and targets for the next year.
- **Annual audit and site visit** to each of the delivery partners to follow how grant funding is spent within each partners financial systems. In Year 2 there was a specific focus that looked at timesheets and in Year 3 they looked at spending around media and publicity, use of contractors, and travel expenses.
- A **quarterly claims process**, with delivery partners submitting to the Council's 'Growth Claims Inbox System' a claim form for all expenditure in the past three months. The Council combined this with performance data and outcomes to produce a spreadsheet of interventions, registrations, attendance, monitoring progress against targets. See the following page for a screenshot of the Council's tracking spreadsheet.
- Each of the **Colleges tracked their own learners' Individualised Learner Record (ILR)** and progressions and saw where learners moved to if they remained with them.
- **Case studies** were also regularly submitted to the Council.

3.5.3. Communications and outreach

Personal Connection

The delivery partners found the most effective way to engage learners was reaching out to them through personal connection – either directly with learners, or via community organisations learners were part of. All employer programmes had come about through **personal relationships** already in place between the **employers** and **Cornwall College or Truro and Penwith College**.

The three core adult education providers had attempted cold outreach to learners and unknown organisations with little success. They found **nurturing the relationships** they already had in place with **local community organisations** to be most effective in bringing in new learners. Often courses could then be developed in partnership with the community organisations, or at least aligned to the needs of their members/clients.

The core adult education providers were also supported by Seetec's recruitment, whereby Seetec worked with their own personal network of community organisations.

Numeracy Champions

Through their community organisations, Seetec also developed Numeracy Champions – members/clients of the community organisations who had completed Multiply - and were trained to become advocates to help promote signing up to Multiply amongst their peers. This approach led to 47 Numeracy Champions from across four community organisations and brought on board a further 225 referrals in Year 2, a much-welcomed addition to the programme.

Other promotion

Other promotional activities to inform people about Multiply or act as a point of information about it included:

- **attending events**, including College events such as open evenings at Cornwall College and Truro and Penwith College, community organisation events and voluntary sector fairs, and events at Job Centre Plus and the Cornish libraries.
- **posters, banners and postcards** in a range of community-based locations.
- Truro and Penwith College and Cornwall Adult Learning had their own **dedicated websites** for Multiply.
- Cornwall College took part in regular local radio **interviews**.
- A Seetec-developed **brochure** with details of all the courses available through the delivery partners.

3.5.4. Facilitators to delivery

The key facilitators to the delivery of Multiply within Cornwall were focused around the **informal and bespoke** nature of the course and that Multiply offered both a fun and nurturing approach to learning. This started with the acknowledgement of the maths anxiety that many brought with them into the classroom.

The informal nature of Multiply courses enabled many of the hard-to-reach learners to feel more confident to attend. Informality came from:

- **Community-based settings**, such as in community group settings that learners were already a part of, or other local and familiar spaces such as libraries or village halls. Stakeholders felt that the key was that courses did not take place in formal education settings as that would have put learners off.
- **Real-life scenario-based content**, rather than abstract maths calculations - such as home budgeting and cooking, DIY, or specific to work settings.
- **No qualifications** and intentionally **short courses** felt more realistic for learners to commit to, especially as many feared and had bad memories of school and learning.

"It's the not having to commit to doing a course for a long period of time, like 36 weeks for GCSE maths. I think it's more appealing to our learners." - *Provider (Cornwall College)*

- **Incorporating elements of fun** – aided by charismatic tutors in some cases. This helped the learners feel more at ease.

"Through Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change we've engaged with learners who aren't enrolled in any other education programmes, most of them don't work, and would have no interest in going to maths lessons, or engaging with any education programmes really. So it's worked really well with them." - *Provider (Cornwall College)*

- Delivery partners liked the **bespoke nature of Multiply**, where courses could be adapted based on learners and cohort need, and in some cases even delivered one to one instead of in a group setting. By having adapted the content to ensure that courses were as relevant and useful as possible, tutors helped to keep learners engaged.

"It's good to know and find the 'little bits' that are relevant to pockets of the community, such as our bespoke 'Tips for Tax' course for small businesses." - *Provider (Truro and Penwith College)*

Truro and Penwith College in particular felt it important to **acknowledge the maths anxiety** many learners experienced. In doing so, it enabled learners to drop their guard in classroom and feel more relaxed, in turn being more interactive in classroom and more receptive to taking the lessons on board.

"The psychological impact, the trauma from school. I say to many of them, tell me your story, and I've seen many tears as a result. If we had to run this project again, that really needs to be the starting point for the government, addressing the psychological impact as it stays with the people who come into our Multiply courses. And that cycle will just continue." - *Provider (Truro and Penwith College)*

3.5.5. Barriers

Barriers to course delivery typically centred around **attendance and recruitment**.

Attendance

Cornwall Adult Education highlighted that although they had recruited learners onto courses, they did not always show up, which felt frustrating given the efforts made to recruit them. The education provider was aware however that given the sometimes-chaotic lifestyles of the learners, this was to be expected.

On-boarding

Cornwall College noted they sometimes struggled to on-board learners in general, due to what they deemed a **competitive learning space**, given all three adult learning providers were targeting the same cohorts. They suggested a more collaborative way of working together should have been established from the outset.

When learners had been **recruited via Seetec** into one of the core delivery partners there was **sometimes a breakdown in communication to getting the learner on board**. Where learning providers did not follow up in a timely manner, it would most likely have led to drop-off. Seetec suspected the change in contact may also have confused learners. The process worked better when Seetec recruited learners came via a link with a community organisation who could maintain the relationships, rather than as an individually recruited person.

Recruitment

The Council of the Isles of Scilly found it difficult to get any uptake to Multiply, beyond two learners in Year 2. Despite being a small market for adult education, stakeholders were still disappointed with this take up because Multiply was seen as more flexible in nature than any other maths qualifications offered through AEB. The CIOS felt this was due to lack of interest from the islanders, who did not see the benefit in improving their numeracy.

3.5.6. Opportunities for innovation

Overall, each of the core adult education delivery partners agreed the main area of innovation came from the ability to create bespoke courses based on learner need, in addition to making the learning fun on Multiply. More specifically:

- Cornwall Adult Education Service were proud of the courses they delivered with their partnerships (such as their 'Eat Well and Spend Less' course with ECCABI). They were also prepared to tailor courses specially for individuals where needed, or for specific groups – working in construction, security, animal care, nature. They were also pleased with the environmental based Multiply course they created, whereby learners and tutors walked through nature and created maths on the go, based on what they encountered.
- Truro and Penwith College were especially pleased with how they adapted Multiply to work for the NHS through their 'Medicines Management' course and other nurse specific Multiply courses, as well as their 'Tips for Tax' course for the self-employed.
- In consideration of tailoring courses to specific needs, Cornwall College shifted the timings of their courses on occasion to better suit learners, such as running them on Saturday mornings, instead of through the week.
- Bringing in Seetec as an 'Engagement Partner' to help onboard learners was also considered an innovative approach to recruitment within the programme. Both Seetec's direct contact with community organisations, and their development of the Numeracy Champions within the community organisations were seen as beneficial to the programme.

3.5.7. Value for money perspective

Overall, Cornwall Council and their delivery partners felt that Multiply was good value for money to run. The funding covered the costs needed to develop and teach the courses.

However, as Year 1 was short and focused on set up, it meant that the delivery of courses only got fully into motion in Years 2 and 3. Some felt that delivery ending at the end of Year 3 was too early. They emphasised that given the effort they had gone through to get the courses up and running, they could have easily continued on the back of the momentum of the previous years for at least another two years and offered even greater value for money.

Despite the challenges faced as a result of the quick turnaround nature of Year 1, coupled with the inability to roll any surplus funding into subsequent years, this did have a positive knock-on effect towards the programme delivery overall:

- Cornwall Council used the surplus budget to fund Seetec to act as an engagement partner.
- Truro and Penwith College used their surplus Year 1 budget to develop their Multiply specific website.

The Council of the Isles of Scilly felt no sense of value for money, given their efforts to set up and be able to deliver content, as well as promote the programme more widely where they received very limited take-up.

3.6. Satisfaction with Multiply

Satisfaction levels were high amongst Cornwall Council and their delivery partners,

3.6.1. Overall satisfaction

Overall Cornwall Council, Seetec and the three core adult education delivery partners were very pleased with their experiences of running Multiply. Multiply had opened out the adult education offer across Cornwall and enabled them to reach many they otherwise would not have expected to reach. Multiply tapped into a need within adult education that had not previously been available – it was able to meet adults at the point of total anxiety about using maths and numbers, and make both maths, and the experience of learning feel achievable. The delivery partners liked that they were able to have fun with learners through the sessions and were really pleased with all the positive outcomes learners achieved.

"Personally, and professionally, it's been a journey, it's been challenging, but it's also been rewarding, especially for the people we've helped. And we don't normally get that opportunity to experiment. So for that I am wholeheartedly grateful." - *Provider (Truro and Penwith College)*

"Multiply has enabled us to engage with individuals who could otherwise be unreached, and helped lead them to further learning and opportunities – it's been a great experience all round." - *LA delivery team*

Despite general satisfaction, some of those interviewed did comment that they would have **preferred to have had a full year to deliver Multiply in Year 1**. The shorter timeframe had put added pressure on the delivery partners to get up and running in the first year.

"It's been good at a wide level, but I would have preferred not to feel like they were chasing our tail and playing catch up in Year 1." - *Provider (Cornwall College)*

The Council of the Isles of Scilly were the one delivery partner who were dissatisfied by their experience with Multiply and regretted having agreed to be a part of it. Given the effort they put in, they were disappointed by the low uptake and felt let down that DfE had not developed their online portal or national advertising campaigns as promised at the beginning of the programme, since they viewed this as a key component of the programme.

3.6.2. Satisfaction with delivery and contents

The three core adult learning providers were all very satisfied with their delivery of Multiply, and the course content they used. Aspects that contributed to their satisfaction included:

- **Course content could be adapted per cohort to learners' needs** and delivered one-to-one if needed.
- **The change in Year 2 that people with Level 2 Maths could take part in Multiply** opened up registrations to the course amongst those who had lost any sense of confidence in using numbers and maths in their everyday lives.
- **Completion of Multiply made going into a formal adult education setting for further study less daunting** based on two factors of Multiply:
 - Courses run from community locations made it feel more down to earth and accessible. The welcoming space gave learners a taste of what college could be like, having been taught by the college tutors through Multiply.
 - The experience of doing a shorter course felt easier to commit to than a longer formalised course. Completion of the Multiply course however gave learners the confidence they could commit to more.
- **Delivery partners developed their own course content**, and they were happy with what they did. The set up of Multiply meant they created bespoke material to different cohorts as required.
- Cornwall Adult Education used the Multiply national marketing toolkit to develop their website and were pleased with the results.

"There are already a lot of numeracy courses out there around GCSE Level 2, but the whole point of Multiply is to reach those individuals who aren't quite at that stage or ready to work at that level. Multiply is the stepping stone to get them to that place. Success to me is reaching those individuals and helping them with that stepping stone, so they're able to move on to the next level." - *Provider (Seetec)*

3.7. Outcomes and impact

- Multiply achieved many positive outcomes for those who attended courses in Cornwall, proving their day to day lives, as well as their future prospects.
- **All core adult learning providers reported improved learner confidence.** This was anecdotally noted by practitioners and providers.

"I think when you've actually delivered the sessions, it is just seeing how confident they are at the end session compared to the start. There's nothing you can measure in terms of quantitative depth of that. But you can see that you definitely had an impact there." -
Provider (Cornwall College)

- **There was also an overall improvement in adult numeracy**, again noted anecdotally by providers and practitioners.
- learner **progression into further education** – specific examples shared by Cornwall College include:
 - One of the learners completed a Level 1 Functional Skills course which resulted in them getting onto an apprenticeship.
 - One of their learners completed a further qualification, which enabled them to sign up for a degree.
 - **Tutors were aware that some learners were now more interested in enrolling on other adult learning courses**, where it would never have been a consideration before.
- **Notably, all core learning providers received enrolments onto Functional Skills Maths or GCSE Maths courses** from individuals who had taken part in a Multiply course.

"You can really drive up that qualification once they actually appreciate what functional skills is, because out in the big, bad world they still just see it as, oh maths GCSE or O levels or whatever." -
Provider (Truro and Penwith College)

- Cornwall Adult Education Service was able to support some of their learners into **employment**.

- Truro and Penwith College was able to **upskill some of the volunteers** in the community organisations, which enabled them **to now run Multiply and other maths-based courses**.

"I'm also upskilling the community providers. They're listening to me explaining the maths elements and going 'oh my god I've never explained it like that. I never saw the maths in that before'." - *Provider (Truro and Penwith College)*

3.8. Future plans

For the most part, there were no plans to continue running Multiply once funding ended. The Council felt that it was not possible to sustain the programme without funding to cover the cost of teaching. The exception was with Truro and Penwith College and some of the courses developed for the NHS. The Multiply team planned to pass on all course material to the Medicines Management course and their Maths Access course within the College for anyone without maths qualifications who wanted to study their nursing degree.

4. Derby City Council case study

4.1. Case study context

Fieldwork for the Derby City Council case study was completed between the 10th of September and the 19th of November 2024, during Year 3 of Multiply delivery. A total of nine interviews were conducted with stakeholders from the LA.

Derby is an urban, unitary authority, based in the East Midlands. It had a budget of £1,339,565 during the three years of the Multiply programme, which is classified as small compared to other areas. It was selected as a case study due to its success engaging a range of hard-to-reach audiences, engagement with community organisations, and its split of internal and external delivery.

4.2. Topline summary

4.2.1. Overall impact

Multiply has left quite a significant imprint across Derby. Derby City Council stakeholders felt that the programme had helped them to reach new learners by engaging them in learning which was user-centred and engaging. The Council worked closely with voluntary and community organisations, which had particularly enabled successful engagement with harder to reach groups, which would otherwise have not been engaged via the existing local council and college networks.

4.2.2. Partnerships and stakeholders

Derby City Council worked directly with three core stakeholders to deliver Multiply: their own Council-run adult education service, Derby Adult Learning; the local FE college, Derby College Group; and Community Action Derby (CAD) who were brought in to oversee the voluntary and community-based providers. CAD's involvement added value to the Council by relieving it of the responsibility of managing relationships with six voluntary and community organisations. However, this intermediary role created an extra layer of administration for the delivery partners, who reported increased paperwork and form-filling.

4.2.3. Maths in everyday life

A key focus of the programme was around the application of maths in everyday life. This included course content about how to budget for shopping and cooking at home, how to use numbers in hobbies and creative activities, and built confidence with maths engaging ways. Tutors and organisations valued the flexible nature of delivery, that they could be more experimental and adjust subsequent programmes based on previous experience.

There were lots of examples of creative interventions, such as craft-based pop-up shops in the local shopping centre, Dungeons and Dragons themed Multiply interventions, hip-hop music production, as well as cooking sessions and supermarket sweeps.

4.2.4. Improvements in confidence

Multiply was seen to have driven an improvement in confidence to use and work with numbers through Multiply's informal and fun approach to learning. Maths anxiety had naturally prevented many of the learners from engaging with formal learning settings to improve their skills or employability. This caused some of the interviewees to reflect on the flaws of the current education system – how a lack of real-life maths skills in the formal school setting can make school maths feel irrelevant to many. This then could lead to disinterest and subsequent low attainment and understanding in maths, and in many cases, students did not appreciate the impact this might have on their employability in the future.

4.2.5. Work with employers

There was success with employee training delivered via Derby College to local NHS staff, with courses focused on career progression by getting learners Maths Level 2 ready. Other providers struggled to work with employers mainly because employers were resistant to give up work time to training and struggled to see how Multiply would benefit their business.

4.3. Strategic overview

This section outlines the background to Derby City Council and the area they operate within, as well as stakeholder feedback on Multiply's programme design.

4.3.1. Background to local area

Derby is a medium-sized city in the East Midlands, with a population of around 270,000 people. The council gained devolved powers for adult education in 2025 (after the end of the Multiply programme). While sectors such as manufacturing and engineering are strong in Derby, some areas in the city experience high deprivation and skills shortages.

4.3.2. Multiply alignment with wider strategic objectives

Multiply is overseen by the Employment Skills & Adult Education team in Derby City Council. The team also deliver learning programmes under the Household Support Fund and the National Careers Service. A key focus for the team is to support adults into work and apprenticeships, as well as supporting other teams within the council, particularly those involved in welfare reform.

Multiply has been compatible with and complementary to the other interventions Derby City Council oversee in the sector. Derby City Council stakeholders felt that Multiply has enabled them to reach individuals who they could never have engaged with before because:

- They engaged with voluntary and community sector providers who had existing relationships and access to the hardest to reach populations.
- The flexible and informal learning structure have made participation more accessible, useful, enjoyable and realistic, especially when learning was focused on real-life application of maths.

"The informal learning approach really helps learners who lack confidence, that environment helps to break barriers they have in their mind to do with learning." - *LA strategic stakeholder*

4.3.3. Stakeholder feedback on design

In general, all stakeholders involved with Multiply across Derby were pleased with the flexible and informal approach to learning that Multiply offered. Delivery providers had enjoyed running Multiply and relished in the fun and creative design techniques they could incorporate into their courses. Notably many of those who attended Multiply courses had experienced maths anxiety and felt limited in their life opportunities. Anecdotally, tutors and providers felt that Multiply had an impressive impact on its ability to increase confidence in dealing with numbers and as such, empowered some to go onto further adult education, into employment and into volunteering. For those with children, they also felt more able to help their children with homework.

"The impact is much wider because they're doing learning around things that are actually real. For those people, it makes a difference, and therefore they're much more engaged. So for example, they'll do things like there was one that we saw, doing a supermarket sweep. It's very creative. But what it's actually teaching people is money in numbers and how to get the most out of your money in the supermarket." - *LA strategic stakeholder*

There were, however, some issues with the overall design of the programme, most notably, the changing nature of requirements each year and the role that Community

Action Derby (CAD) had played for the voluntary and community-based organisations (VCs).

Changing requirements in programme delivery

Year 1: With shorter timeframes to get delivery providers onboarded and running Multiply in Year 1, Derby City Council shared having been less strict about what providers were delivering, instead just giving them space to ‘get on with what they needed to do’ in the first year of delivery.

Year 2: In year 2, delivery providers, particularly those within the VC space were informed that running short and bespoke programmes was no longer allowed, and instead they had to provide a minimum of 10-15 learning hours per learner.⁶ Feedback from providers was that this substantial change in delivery guidelines was disruptive. Some VCs were also frustrated they were only informed about the changing requirement three months into the second year, rather than ahead of it as plans had already been put into place and had to be altered. All VCs remained in place to deliver Multiply despite this change.

Year 3: Further local changes meant that all learners had to be referred on to adult education courses or employment opportunities after completing a Multiply course. For many of the VC organisations, this felt inappropriate, when many of their learners had no interest or need to go into a formal learning environment or look for work (such as pensioners, those with severe disabilities, or people in supported housing with a range of other issues to cope with in their lives). The mental health, confidence, and social benefits were much more important for these cohorts.

The role of Community Action Derby

Although the Council viewed the partnership as a major success, some questioned the value that Community Action Derby (CAD) brought to the VC organisations it supported. Although CAD was involved from early Year 1, many VC organisations were unaware of its role until Year 2. Some felt its involvement slowed down communications when the Council had to pass messages on to CAD first, to then pass these onto the VCs. Other VCs had questioned CAD’s role altogether, since they were already in direct contact with the Council about Multiply. Additionally, differing data requirements from CAD and the Council had created extra administrative burden for providers.

⁶ This was a local requirement rather than a change of policy from DfE and reflected a shift in delivery priorities during the second year of the programme into progression, which was often linked to the length of intervention for learners.

4.4. Programme set-up

4.4.1. Partner engagement

The Council had three key strategic partnerships already in place before Multiply, which the Head of Adult Skills, Employment & Education identified - based on experience with other adult learning programmes (e.g. the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Integration Fund) - was the most efficient model for setting up and delivering Multiply. Delivery partners submitted Expressions of Interest (EOIs) after being approached by the council or CAD. Of note, the same organisations delivered Multiply across the 3 years of the programme.

- **Derby Adult Learning Services (DALs)** - a department within Derby City Council
- **Derby College** - the local college
- **Community Action Derby (CAD)** oversaw delivery done by a range of VCs. Partnered with the VC sector through CAD allowed the council to delegate management of EOIs and financial management, while they jointly oversaw quality and delivery. VC organisations were well placed to engage harder-to-reach communities due to existing trusted relationships and their ability to deliver creative, accessible courses that subtly embedded maths learning.

Multiply delivery partners included:

- **Artcore** - a community art-space in a very deprived area of Derby.
- **Baby People** – a youth-based arts & education provider using hip hop, rap, Dj-ing, breakdancing and graffiti art. They work largely with young people not in mainstream education, using their interest in music to help with learning. Many of their young people come from the South Indian or Roma Slovakian communities (and have English as a Second Language, ESL or English as an Additional Language, EAL).
- **Derventio** – a housing trust with residents who typically have a broader range of issues and addictions. They also have good partnerships in place as a training provider to organisations working with pensioners, ESL and people with a range of other issues.
- **DHA (Direct Help & Advice)** – an independent charity providing training, education and support into work offering specific advice around debt and housing issues. Their learners were typically those who needed social support, had ESL backgrounds or came to them via other charities.
- **Food & Education Derby** – committed to supporting and empowering disadvantaged individuals in Derby, with a primary emphasis on refugees and

asylum seekers, through provision of food and clothing; opportunities to learn English and Maths, plus a range of other support services.

- **YMCA** – they typically ran Multiply with their own residents, adults with special needs, retired people, parents and other local community groups (including a local Pakistani group).

4.4.2. Employer engagement

Attempts to engage employers had mixed success in Derby, with Derby College being the only delivery partner reporting successful employer delivery. They led an effective partnership with the local NHS trust, focused on career progression by moving learners onto Level 2 Maths after completing Multiply. Courses ran online, with sessions held each Wednesday afternoon, 13:30 – 15:30. Training included an introduction to Level 2 Maths before completing the course. The key to the successful delivery of Multiply for the NHS was their willingness to ringfence the assigned 2 hours of training during the working day each week.

Prior to delivering Multiply, the NHS had found some employees struggling with attempting Level 2 maths qualifications and had become easily disengaged with their learning. Multiply had the benefit of building NHS learners' confidence throughout the courses and enabled them to feel better equipped to take on Level 2 Maths training afterwards.

“We created the course in partnership with the NHS. Logistically that’s a big deal for an employer to ringfence 2 hours a week for their employees to attend. And starting with Multiply prior to Level 2 Maths was a really good approach, as going straight into Level 2 didn’t work well for all staff. Multiply helped to build their confidence before progressing onto Level 2.” - *Derby College*

Derby College also attempted, unsuccessfully, to work with other employers, including M&S who had a large distribution centre nearby and employed many employees who had English as a second language. At the time of engagement, M&S were only interested in an English-based course for their employees, but had they received this, the college felt M&S would have been open to subsequently running Multiply in the following year or two.

Two of the other VC delivery partners were also tasked to run Multiply with employers but despite best efforts, could not fulfil this. They found that employers were not keen to let staff attend the course during work hours and some were reportedly put off by the lack of qualification upon completion.

4.4.3. Target audience selection

Derby Adult Learning Service (DALs) was central to reaching key learner groups:

The Council was confident that DALs could engage learners through its dedicated teams focused on family outreach, ESL learners, and functional skills maths.

College and VC partners were brought in to extend Multiply's reach beyond those already connected to DALs. Partners included:

- **Derby College**, who was appointed for their strength in working collaboratively with employers (namely the local NHS); ESL learners; and local communities in deprived areas who would not typically commit to functional skills learning.
- **The VC partners via CAD** were considered to have much better relationships and access to the following harder to reach communities in the area:
 - Those not in education, employment or training (NEETs)
 - Those with ESL
 - Housing Trust residents typically with broad range of issues and / or addictions
 - Pensioners
 - Financially struggling / in need of social support
 - Socially deprived
 - Parents of school-aged children
 - Adults with special needs

4.4.4. Facilitators & barriers to programme set-up

Partnerships

Trusted partnerships enabled smooth implementation. While stakeholders did not reference many facilitators and barriers as part of the delivery of Multiply, it was clear that working with well-known, community-connected organisations - especially those reaching harder-to-engage groups - was key to the programme's success.

Use of grants

A grant-based approach accelerated delivery; instead of using procurement, the Council opted for grants, allowing delivery partners to get started more quickly and with fewer administrative hurdles. No drawbacks to this approach were mentioned.

4.5. Programme delivery

4.5.1. Delivery model

Derby City Council delivery model

Derby City Council handled around 40% of Multiply delivery via their own Derby Adult Learning Services (DALs) department. The remaining 60% of provision was contracted out, with 10% led by Derby College and the remaining 50% handled by Community Action Derby (CAD) to issue grants to the six volunteer and community organisations brought on board. These organisations include Artcore, Baby People, Derventio, DHA, Food & Education Derby and YMCA.

Team Structures

The Multiply team in Derby City Council was led by their Head of Employment Skills & Adult Education, who oversees all adult learning services in Derby. At a day-to-day level, Multiply was handled by an Adult Learning Senior Manager, who was responsible for implementing the delivery plan, financial planning, and overseeing delivery and data collection from the delivery partners. They were supported by an Adult Learning Manager who was also responsible for overseeing the delivery of Multiply through DALs.

The DALs Multiply team had three curriculum leads who developed programmes focused on their core area and reported to the Council's Adult Learning Manager. The curriculum areas were Family Learning, ESL and Maths Curriculum. DALs had five to six tutors in place to deliver Multiply to learners.

Derby College had a Team Manager in place from their Community Adult division who oversaw two tutors delivering Multiply, with one tutor focused on in-person delivery and the other, online delivery.

CAD worked in partnership with the council, their direct responsibility was to handle the initial expressions of interest from the volunteer and community providers and to administer their grant payments. In partnership, the Council and CAD led the training for these providers and worked together across the quality and compliance elements of Multiply. CAD's partnership agreement and approach with the Council was set up through their CEO, and they had a Project Co-ordinator in place who oversaw the community partners at a day-to-day level.

The VC organisations typically had a project manager / coordinator in place who developed course content, oversaw delivery and handled the administrative side of delivering Multiply. In some cases, they also delivered the programme to learners as well. Organisations generally had one to three tutors / team on board who delivered Multiply.

Interventions

Delivery providers ran Multiply courses to address a range of the interventions, with all or most providers delivering to:

- **Intervention A** - increased confidence, as a first step towards formal numeracy skills.
- **Intervention B** – help people use numeracy to manage their money.
- **Intervention I** – numeracy activities developed in partnership with community organisations to engage the hardest to reach learners.

The following interventions were also addressed by at least one of the providers in Derby:

- **Intervention C** – innovative programmes delivered with employers.
- **Intervention D** – courses for people to enable them to progress in their job / career.
- **Intervention E** – courses for those with Level 2 maths, to lead to a functional skills qualification.
- **Intervention F** – courses for parents to help their children, and with their own progression.
- **Intervention H** – courses for those leaving the care system at 19+.
- **Intervention J** – embed relevant maths into other vocational courses.

Course delivery

Derby City Council were very pleased with the range of Multiply programmes on offer in the area. Programmes included:

- **DALS** ran weekly sessions of up to three hours, totalling 10 - 30 hours per course. They ran from a mix of council premises across the city or community halls and partner spaces. Content varied by the teams who delivered the course:
 - **Family Learning Team:** how to budget for meals and meal preparation, how to budget for shopping, and how to understand supermarket deals.
 - **ESL Team:** to understand numbers from an English language point of view and how numbers work in English society.
 - **Core Maths Team:** added Multiply-based maths activities to their Functional Skills maths course. This included practical activities such as how to work out how many pots of paint are needed to paint a house or a landscape garden planning activity.

- **Engagement events:** one-off events in the community to reach out to those with low confidence in maths, with fun activities that brought maths back to everyday activities. Events were used to signpost to their other Multiply programmes.

"When we run engagement events, it's about having a conversation with those who say things like 'I failed maths at school or college, it's not for me, I was more into arts' and bringing it back to their everyday, so when they go to the supermarket they can work out deals for example." - *LA strategic stakeholder*

- **Derby College** ran their courses from a mix of college buildings, with day and evening courses on offer. They also ran courses in community centres based in areas of high deprivation, as well as online for the NHS employees.
 - **Their Core Course** was based on four workshops of two and a half hours each. Basic Maths focused on building confidence/help kids with homework; Making Money Go Further; Is It A Good Deal looked at % and cost of credit; and DIY based on home-based projects that needed to use area, shape and general measurements.
 - **Sustainability course:** an additional course, promoted based on upcycling household objects, rather than the maths aspect. In one course they used toilet rolls to make gift boxes.
- **Artcore** ran a range of six-week programmes with weekly sessions of two hours. Each programme was often led by an external creative and focused on a bespoke creative project such as:
 - **Making ceramics**, that helped understand measurement and volume
 - **Making a pinhole camera**, which included calculating exposure time
 - **Jewellery making**, which considered budgeting of materials and the sale of items.

"We've had an artist come in, who has worked with the groups to make their own jewellery pieces. So they work together to understand how much money they would need to buy the materials and the time it would take to create them and then they set up their own sort of shop in the workshop space. And so they practise the exchange of money to buy the items and things like that." - *Artcore*

- **Baby People** ran a 10-week course, through weekly sessions of two hours, that used maths-based aspects of music creation and music promotion as content (such as understanding beats per minute; creating marketing budgets for a single; using Excel to develop a single release plan). The course was promoted alongside the promise of free time in the music studio, in exchange for doing a course with maths embedded exercises.

"I think the reality is they're not going to go sit in a maths lesson, so the very nature of using music and something they've got an interest in is impactful." - *Baby People*

- **Derwentio Housing Trust** had two core areas of focus:
 - **Pop-up Shop:** A 6-week course ran over weekly three-hour sessions, once a quarter. Participants would make their goods and crafts with a view to sell them in the final week at a pop-up shop in the local shopping centre. Numeracy was used to consider the cost of materials; how much to make; the price of sales and how much they could afford to discount by; profit and loss.
 - **Budgeting course:** Delivered one-to-one for residents, through four sessions, three hours each. The course included the creation of a personal budget; a spend diary to compare against their budget; shopping activities and included price comparisons.

"The guys absolutely love the Pop Up Shop. What I've found is people don't want to discuss numeracy, or sit in a classroom and be taught like children. And even when I bring in the worksheets, I make sure they have lots of pictures, and we talk about what's on them together in the group." - *Derwentio*

- **DHA** ran courses based on three to four weekly sessions of three hours each. Courses were typically run for groups, but they would run them one-to-one if needed too. DHA had a range of different modules that they could draw from and would set each course's content based on learner need. Courses would generally include at least two to three of the following: Supermarket Sweep; Simple Guide to Budgeting; Exploring Self-Employment and Number Munchies.

"The DHA's Supermarket Sweep doesn't scream 'you're doing a maths course', but it does show you're doing a fun activity." - *Community Action Derby*

- **YMCA** employed two drama teachers to run their courses, with a view to ensuring a fun, creative approach to learning. They developed a range of bespoke courses using a 'maths-by-stealth' approach that showed learners how they were already using maths in everyday life. Courses included a fantasy Dungeons and Dragons theme; cycling theme (learners completed maths challenges on a cycle route); upcycling (learners made a T-shirt into a bag-using counting and number sequences); making a clock (learners worked on time, roman numerals, adding/ subtracting, measuring and using protractor), and a maths-based escape room (with money-based puzzles, weights/ measures and shapes/ geometrics).

"Our aim is to engage with people through fun activities and use hidden stealthy maths as we call it, using the maths we do regularly and frequently. We've done a workshop involving a mini trebuchet, another themed on a fantasy with a sword and stone, and also one tied in with cycling as my colleague is quite into that." - *YMCA*

4.5.2. Programme management

Derby City Council and CAD carried out a range of monitoring activities with their delivery partners to track and manage activity across Multiply in the Derby area through:

Regular meetings:

- **Every four to six weeks** with the Council's core stakeholders (Derby College and CAD) they looked at performance and challenges. The Council also touched base with the DALs curriculum managers too.
- **CAD ran a monthly group meeting** with their delivery partners.
- **Quarterly meetings** between Council and all delivery partners and DALs came together to share good practice and talked overall about their funding, promotion, enrolments, audit and compliance.
- **Regular visits from the Council and CAD** to quality check and see all delivery partners in action.

Delivery targets were tracked by all providers.⁷ The data below was collected via Microsoft enrolment form from all CAD partners; Derby College sent their data to DCC to input into their systems, and DALS learner data goes directly into DCC systems too. Data included:

- Number of courses and one-off sessions
- Number of learners enrolling, attending, completing
- Multiply interventions being used
- Demographic data and refugee/asylum status.

Progress tests: Many of the delivery providers conducted tests with their learners at the start and end of their Multiply programmes, to track the expected improvement in their maths skills. This was often wrapped up into the demographic data collected at the start of the programme too.

Paper feedback forms completed by learners at the end of their course, that confirms progression and impact after completing (such as employment, learning, confidence, and any other impacts). At the time of interview, in September 2024, the council were considering converting the paper form to an online one.

Case studies were collated by all providers for the Council to be shared with the senior leadership team, and for their marketing team to use for stories to be shared on their social media platforms. Case studies also provided inspiration for the other providers.

Some of the providers also conducted further activities. DALS sent out learner progression surveys by text and email every few months to find out what learners are doing now, and Derby College tracked their learners' pathways, when they do further study at the College.

4.5.3. Communications and outreach

A focus on building and nurturing networks and relationships

The most effective form of promoting Multiply programmes across Derby was through personal connection, either directly with learners, or via organisations who had direct access or relationship with the intended learner audience through:

- **Engagement events**, used by DALS, Derby College, Artcore and DHA, where partners hosted stalls at local employment or family events and within their own spaces to provide a taste of what a Multiply course may involve. Activities at

⁷ There was not a formal requirement for the VC organisations to collect official evidence. As such, Baby People and DHA were only focussed on providing the minimum registration data required as both the LA and these providers felt that expecting anything further from their cohorts was not realistic given their life situation.

their stands provided a hook to showcase how maths could be fun and how people could already be using maths as part of everyday life.

- **Talking directly with learners already engaged with organisations.** Many of the delivery providers were already engaged with potential Multiply learners through their other courses and services. Providers would directly inform those they felt would benefit from doing Multiply. Derwentio also made it mandatory for any of their residents who were in arrears on service charges to undertake their Multiply Budgeting Course.
- **Word of mouth from other learners.** Artcore and Baby People benefitted from their Multiply learners telling friends about their positive experience with Multiply, leading to further enrolments onto subsequent courses.
- **Referrals from other organisations:** Many of the organisations had good relationships with other community groups, who could inform their clients about Multiply. Artcore and DALs both benefitted from referrals via the Job Centre, while Artcore also received further referrals via the Council and Derby College.

Networking roles

Many of the community and voluntary organisations had dedicated networking roles in place to actively meet and greet others in the community and inform them about Multiply.

DALS created a new Adult Learning Manager role who, with dedicated time to focus on Multiply, was able to meet with other teams and departments in the council who had previously been unaware of DALs' overall adult learning offer and Multiply courses more specifically. This enabled many learner referrals from other council departments.

Supporting promotional activities

Delivery providers also used a range of other promotional techniques to inform potential learners about Multiply. They often viewed these activities as supportive to enrolments, but that the relational aspects outlined in Section 4.3.1 were the key to getting learners through the door. Supporting promotional activities used by delivery providers in Derby included:

- Using their own social media accounts or social media advertising
- Having a dedicated space on their website about Multiply
- Posters in public and community-based spaces across Derby. This included posters on roundabouts and street signs for DALs
- Leaflets in public and community-based spaces across Derby.

Messaging in communications

Given delivery partners' awareness of the maths anxiety potential learners would have, they typically avoided use of the word 'maths' in their promotional activities and were also careful about how they used the word 'numbers'. The focus of messaging was instead on the 'thing' the course was centred around: budgeting or the creative thing they would produce, such as music, jewellery, upholstery or DIY (see Figure 1 below). Many of the delivery providers also made it clear that Multiply was a free course, and if incentives were included, they made this clear too.

Figure 1 : Promotional poster provided by Derby College



4.5.4. Facilitators to delivery

The successful delivery of Multiply in Derby was seen to be as a result of two key factors: having utilised already existing relationships and the provision of an encouraging and inclusive learning environment.

Established relationships

The vast majority of enrolments to the Multiply programmes across Derby were a result of already established relationships. VC organisations were able to encourage their own clients and service users into their Multiply programmes due to existing trust with their cohorts. Furthermore, a good experience of having completed Multiply led to positive word of mouth amongst learners' peers and led to further enrolments on subsequent Multiply programmes.

Relationships with other organisations in the community also led to referrals into Multiply programmes. This included the Job Centre, who referred clients to Artcore and DALs; other council departments referred into DALs; and other community organisations referred into Derby College and the YMCA. Derby College pivoted between promoting Multiply to new learners in Year 1 to focusing on communities they already had established relationships with in Year 2 (learners on their other courses and community spaces / organisations they were running some of their courses through). The shift provided notably improved enrolment numbers for the college in Year 2 and 3.

Encouraging and inclusive learning environments

Many of the learners attending Multiply courses had negative associations with their previous formal education. The following elements therefore had a positive impact and helped to encourage learners to take part:

- **A non-formal approach to learning:** Having provided many of the programmes in community settings (such as community centres, libraries and church halls) that were familiar, easily accessed and non-classroom based removed any sense of formalised education.

"I think the reality is they're not going to go sit in a maths lesson, so the very nature of using music and something they've got an interest in is impactful." - *Baby People*

- **Learning through stealth and creativity:** The maths having been hidden within creative techniques or everyday lifestyle situations (such as budgeting, cooking and shopping) made course content less abstract and more practical for real life.

"It's really broken down barriers for the individuals who are engaged in our courses because a lot of our adults who we engage with have a fear of maths, or they've never been able to learn it in such a safe space as well. And being able to do it creatively really breaks down those barriers for people." - *Artcore*

- **Non-qualification courses:** With no formal qualification to achieve, any sense of pressure to perform or anticipation of 'failure' was removed.
- **Flexible programme design:** The adaptable nature of Multiply allowed delivery providers to tailor content to individual or group needs and this made learning more relevant and engaging
- **Support for learners with additional needs:** YMCA and Artcore reported that tutors assisted learners with limited digital literacy or English skills by talking through enrolment forms and test answers, then inputting the responses themselves. This approach helped keep learners engaged who might otherwise have been discouraged.

Many of the delivery providers also offered **incentives** to encourage learners through their doors. Incentives included:

- **Free time in the music studio** with Baby People

- **Love2shop vouchers** for NHS workers and food at workshops with Derby College
- **£10 supermarket voucher** at the end of the course, plus prizes to be won (sweets, tablet, echo dot, 6month SIM card) throughout with DHA
- **£40 shopping gift cards** for completing a course, **plus keeping anything they made**, and **prizes for being first to complete/best time** on puzzle-based courses with the YMCA.

4.5.5. Barriers to delivery

A few common barriers existed with regards to delivery of Multiply, typically around learner engagement and data and information gathering.

Learner enrolment

- **Noticeably fewer learners enrolled when providers used ‘boring’ course names or ‘maths’ in their course titles:** Providers could see the negative impact they had on the number of learner enrolments in the earlier days of Multiply, compared to course titles focused on the creative or budgeting focused elements of the programme, which generated more interest.
- **Lack of referrals:** DHA expressed disappointment that referrals through the Council and the Jobcentre did not materialise.

“When course names are boring it doesn’t work, we could see it in the system that we weren’t getting the enrolments when that was the case. The course titles need to be engaging and not maths heavy.” -
LA strategic stakeholder

- **Engaged parents and YMCA residents proved challenging for some providers:** Derby College was unable to meet the parent recruitment target they were tasked with; however, they believed this to be due to DALs’ good parent offer. The YMCA also struggled to get their own residents on board, and when residents considered maths to be a barrier for them, it was hard to encourage them to push through this. They also found recruitment harder in Year 3, their theory being that any potential learners had already taken part in a programme across Derby delivered from one of the other providers.

The decision not to let learners come to a second Multiply course, with the same learning outcome, proved a barrier for some of CAD's delivery partners:⁸

- **Baby People:** They found that learners who came to an initial course could bring three to four friends to the next course and having them present helped ensure the new learners would come through.
- **Artcore:** Given their programmes offered a very specific creative focus, they felt it was natural for some learners to want to do another one of their Multiply courses. Artcore naturally wanted to encourage this, given they saw the confidence gains with each new experience. They did bypass the 'second course' rule where possible, by focusing on different learning outcomes in any subsequent courses where they could.

"They can't be registered for more than one learning aim. So we've been trying to find ways around that so that we can still support those individuals to progress. Some aren't ready to move on, who are at the stage where they're still increasing their confidence and wanting to learn more." - *Artcore*

Data and information gathering

Delivery partners who worked with some of the most challenging and hardest to reach participants found that the required demographic information needed at sign-up could be off-putting to enrolment. These learners were naturally suspicious of 'the system' and were concerned about any wider implications that sharing their personal data - or taking part in courses - may have on their lives.

"There's far too much paperwork to be honest. For them to have to try and fill in, we are dealing a lot of the time with people who don't have qualifications for a reason, who don't want to do things for a reason. And when you present them with a 30 Question Questionnaire before they start, as well as this registration and then we've got to do an assessment to show how far you've improved by the end. You'll lose some of them in the first 10 minutes." - *YMCA*

A common issue noted by Derby College and many of the CAD delivery partners was the **heavy administration load required to run Multiply**. They would have preferred less paperwork and a more streamlined system to work with. YMCA and Derventio, who were also running Multiply with other local areas, noted each had a different system of

⁸ This was not a formal funding rule put in place by DfE as part of the Multiply programme and was likely a local level decision.

administration. They felt that this was unexpected for a national programme and placed additional burden on them when they would have hoped for more integrated approaches.

4.5.6. Opportunities for innovation

VC sector inclusion

The decision to bring in the VC sector to provide courses with a creative and holistic approach to maths education was considered the most innovative approach to programme delivery. Coupled with their non-formal learning settings, the delivery partners provided a stealth like approach to learning maths, which was necessary to get learners through the door. In Year 2, both DAL and Derby College were encouraged to learn from the CAD partners and take on board some of their approaches too. Some of the most innovative approaches to learning included:

- **Baby People's use of music production** and their music studio to hook in some of the hardest to reach NEETs.
- **Derventio's pop-up shops** – provided an initial creative experience that helped to build maths confidence, and empowered learners to feel capable of subsequently running the pop-up shop and handling payments.
- **DHA's Supermarket Sweep** – led by a self-developed book, based on things like tricks supermarkets play, weights, yellow stickers, working out deals in line with weights - calculating the cheapest. Supermarket Sweep also caught the eye of the media, with DHAs Community Development Manager interviewed on the local BBC radio station.
- **YMCA fully embraced the opportunity to create quirky courses** such as their Dungeon & Dragon theme, maths-based escape room, cycling theme, clock making and upcycling T-shirts into bags.
- **Artcore's range of creative projects** such as making ceramics, pinhole cameras, jewellery, clocks, and upcycling upholstery.
- **Derby College followed in the footsteps of YMCA and Artcore and added a 'Sustainability' based course** based on upcycling household objects.

"Multiply has enabled innovation inside our most disadvantaged and at need communities to the point where it underpins social mobility, because without a reasonable understanding of maths, you cannot have social mobility." - *LA strategic stakeholder*

Incentives

The use of incentives was also considered an innovative approach to help encourage learners through the door, especially as other grant funded programmes did not have the budgets available to do so. Delivery providers therefore appreciated the opportunity incentives gave them to help get more learners through their doors, who otherwise may not have come.

Reminders

Derby College also started sending text reminders to their learners before each session and followed up with no shows (with messages such as 'we missed you' or 'hope to see you next week/session'). The college saw a marked improvement in attendance by employing this technique.

4.5.7. Value for money perspective

- **Within the LA, a Senior Manager was responsible for the financial planning,** data collection and monitoring partners' delivery – as well as the strategic and delivery plans.
- **In general, the majority of delivery providers felt the budgets available through Multiply offered good value for money:** The grants covered the cost to develop and teach the courses, conduct the associated administration and attendance to meetings, as well as covered the cost of materials, room hire (when necessary) and incentives.
- **A few providers noted running at a loss:** For example, DHA had put a lot of time into sourcing learners and were also running some courses at a one-to-one level and this naturally made Multiply more time intensive. Derby College felt their time spent on recruitment in Year 1 had been running at a loss, however this had reversed in Year 3, and they could see their hard work had paid off over time.
- **Multiply created systemic value:** Baby People highlighted that by engaging individuals reliant on benefits and not actively seeking employment, Multiply still provided a meaningful first step toward positive life changes.

"We're working with people that have accepted they're going to be economically inactive for long periods and don't see options. There's some of the lads talk about they never thought they would get a job, but this is making it easier for them to think about that now. And if you think of someone being economically inactive for 10 years, or homeless, or dealing with substance misuse, criminality, prison - think of the state spend on all of those. But if this is the start to getting them back on their feet, ultimately this is very good value for the state." - *Baby People*

4.6. Satisfaction with Multiply

Satisfaction levels for Multiply were high amongst Derby City Council, delivery partners and learners too. However, there were a few areas holding back satisfaction with delivery partners, which largely related to the practical delivery of the programme.

4.6.1. Overall satisfaction

Overall, Derby City Council and all delivery partners were very satisfied with their experiences of running Multiply. They felt very encouraged by the impact the programme had on learners' confidence to use maths and numbers. All involved would recommend it, especially when approaches involved any of the following: learning with creativity, teaching maths through stealth and delivering courses in an informal setting. All three of these aspects addressed learner anxiety and built confidence, which are known barriers to adult education.

"I think the Maths Multiply model has worked. It sits right at the beginning for those learners who are lacking confidence, before they could even contemplate going onto a maths programme at entry level or above. It's very practical, real-life maths and numbers, and that's what has made it work." - *LA strategic stakeholder*

"Whether you're entry level or above, it's still a fairly formal process to study maths as an adult learner. So I think I think the intention has been right from the DfE to come up with something much less formal. It's about confidence building. It's literally right at the start, build that confidence in maths, just simple things with numbers and budgeting, how to save money, how to look at deals, you know, a bit about banking, that very simplistic approach to everyday maths that we encounter." - *LA strategic stakeholder*

Delivery partners felt that learners were also generally satisfied by their experiences of Multiply. Delivery partners interviewed often described it as a 'life changing experience' for learners – having moved from maths avoidance to feeling comfortable and confident to use numbers and maths in their everyday lives. As outlined in the outcome and impact section, there were many positive outcomes for learners with their newfound confidence including: employment; being in a position to move towards employment; further learning and qualifications; volunteering; newfound life skills through budgeting and creativity; socialisation and new friendships. Derby City Council and CAD were also able to see first-hand through site visits the positive impact that Multiply was having for learners and with the organisations delivering it.

"The impact is much wider because they're doing learning around things that are actually real. For those people, it makes a difference, and therefore they're much more engaged. So for example, they'll do things like there was one that we saw, doing a supermarket sweep. It's very creative. But what it's actually teaching people is money in numbers and how to get the most out of your money in the supermarket. And another, they upholstered the chairs using all the kind of areas, square roots, times by this ups and that's downs and miles and plus to be able to cut and measure the materials, work out the volume of the padding necessary." - *LA strategic stakeholder*

Given the above, all interviewed were sorry the funding would cease at the end of Year 3. They saw Multiply as filling a huge gap in accessibility of hard-to-reach groups, improved their lives and future opportunities; and offered an alternative learning platform to what was perceived to be a less relevant and less inclusive format in the formal education system.

4.6.2. Satisfaction with delivery and content

Factors supporting satisfaction

Derby City Council and their delivery partners were generally satisfied with their delivery of Multiply. This was due to:

- **The flexible nature of delivery of Multiply:** Courses were adapted per cohort and sometimes per individual and by not having a stringent set of marking criteria or being accredited was seen as a huge advantage. Both LA and provider stakeholders felt that accreditation would have felt too formal and added extra pressure for learners, especially those who had negative experiences at school.
- **The informal, fun learning environment:** The sessions were typically held in relaxed, non-classroom settings such as community centres, village halls, church halls, libraries, or rooms provided by community organisations and therefore created a welcoming and less intimidating atmosphere. Rather than traditional teaching with a teacher at the front, learning was delivered informally through creative techniques, games, challenges, and group discussions, with maths naturally embedded in the activities. Participants often described the sessions as enjoyable and engaging.

Factors limiting satisfaction

Despite these successes, certain aspects of Multiply's delivery held back overall satisfaction:

- **Referrals:** Some delivery partners relied more heavily on referrals than others, with mixed outcomes. Artcore benefitted significantly from referrals via Derby City Council, the Job Centre, Derby College, and Derby University. In contrast, DHA had been promised referrals from the Council and Job Centre, but these did not materialise, as it appeared referrals were directed elsewhere.
- **Programme changes:** Mid-programme adjustments, such as the changes to learning hours in Year 2 and the requirement to refer all learners to further education or employment in Year 3, posed challenges.⁹ These issues were primarily experienced by CAD delivery partners, rather than DALs or Derby College.
- **Effectiveness of CAD:** Many community partners questioned the need to have CAD in place to oversee them.
- **Administration burden:** Both Derby College and several CAD delivery partners expressed concerns about the heavy administrative workload required to run

⁹ This was not a DfE policy decision, but a local-level requirement.

Multiply. They would have preferred a more streamlined system with reduced paperwork.

4.7. Outcomes and impact

Derby City Council and its delivery partners felt that Multiply successfully delivered many positive outcomes for learners. It helped them meet the key objectives they initially set in relation to the interventions they selected, as well as achieving other significant impacts. A summary of the outcomes achieved across the city is provided below. Note that much of this evidence was gathered from stakeholder, tutor, provider and learner feedback.¹⁰ Learners with Baby People also created [this video](#) to showcase some of the work delivered through Multiply across the area, including how the Music and Maths course used musical notes and their length to teach numeracy.¹¹

4.7.1. Improvement in numeracy skills

Delivery partners who Verian spoke to felt that participants showed notable progress in areas such as budgeting and money management (Menu of Interventions B). The YMCA specifically highlighted that learners also developed a better understanding of everyday finances, this included the use of current and savings accounts which in turn contributed to increased financial confidence and independence.

"I've got a video of a lady pulling a sword from the stone going 'I've done maths' waving it above her head like a champion. With complete shock and excitement that she'd done the maths she hadn't expected to be able to." - YMCA

4.7.2. Improvement in confidence

Learners often experienced increased confidence in using and dealing with numbers in everyday life, aligning with Menu of Interventions A. This was noted by tutors and other stakeholders who had seen learners' responses to the sessions. This was also related to anecdotal accounts of progression onto other learning, or intentions towards progression; as well as helping with learners' confidence more generally through social interaction and self-reliance:

¹⁰ Unless any organisations are specified, each outcome listed was identified by all delivery partners in the research.

¹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAtfkGVRtc8>

- The boost in self-assurance also extended to pursuing formal numeracy qualifications, with many learners from DALs and the college progressing onto Maths Functional Skills courses and even GCSE Maths through the college.
- Participants reported having felt more 'learner ready' - capable of engagement in further study, including in more formal educational settings if needed.
- The programme also helped individuals feel more comfortable being out in public and interacting socially.

"One lady ended up getting a job as a care worker. The Pop Up shop finished in December, she went onto do her Level 2 Maths in January and passed it, which she needed to do the carers course. But when she came to us she could only do her 5 and 10 times tables." -
Derventio

4.7.3. Progression

Accounts of learners having progressed onto other courses, volunteering roles or career progression, were anecdotally noted by stakeholders:

- Learners moved on to a variety of non-maths courses, including English for ESL learners and creative subjects, thus broadened their educational journeys.
- NHS staff participated through the college experienced career progression (Menu of Interventions C).
- Many learners across CAD's delivery partners extended their learning into the home, engaging children, partners, and wider family members (Menu of Interventions F).
- A small number of YMCA learners entered the workforce.
- Baby People's participants began considerations for employment for the first time.
- Learners from Derventio and DHA even started their own creative small businesses. This showcased the programme's wider personal and professional impact.
- Some learners took their engagement a step further by volunteering on subsequent Multiply courses delivered by Baby People and Artcore. This demonstrated increased confidence, commitment to learning, and a desire to support others on similar educational journeys.

“The majority of the group were using English as a second language. By the end of the course, they spoke about how they had the confidence to take tests or apply for maths courses to take qualifications that would help with their progress in recruitment for work.” - *Baby People*

"We had one participant volunteer come and man one of our stores at our craft fair last Christmas. That individual would never have been able to have the confidence to exchange money. Which obviously goes back to the maths thing, but also just their confidence in general in their, you know their passion to want to volunteer and to interact with individuals at the craft fair." - *Artcore*

4.7.4. Increased learner engagement and confidence through creativity

Tutors and stakeholders noted that the creative approaches used across Multiply programmes led to a noticeable shift in learners’ attitudes toward maths and had made learning more enjoyable and less intimidating:

- All CAD delivery partners observed that many learners were no longer scared of maths and visibly enjoyed participating in sessions.
- Derventio successfully ran a range of creative pop-up shops in a local shopping centre, in which they showcased the practical and engaging outcomes of their learning activities.

4.7.5. Improved relationships developed

- Between DALs and other local authority departments, especially the House Fund team, in which this led to a more cohesive wraparound service for vulnerable individuals
- Between delivery partners and learners, particularly at Derventio and Artcore
- Among learners themselves, with new friendships formed at Derventio and DHA
- Between delivery organisations and their external partners, as seen with Artcore

4.7.6. Benefits to delivery partners

Organisational changes included:

- Derventio Housing Trust learners were able to start paying their service charges on time and clearing arrears. This prompted a new policy that required residents in arrears to complete the budgeting part of Multiply.
- Baby People, whose core audience is youth, gained the confidence to expand into adult education after having successfully delivered Multiply to young adults.

4.8. Future plans

Without confirmation of any further funding for Multiply after Year 3, both Derby City Council and their delivery partners did not think it would be sustainable to continue running Multiply programmes, despite a desire for them to continue. Derby City Council were also concerned that their imminent move into the East Midlands Combined Authority would create less opportunity to fund future Multiply initiatives, as each council would be competing within the Combined Authority to fund many other things - and therefore expected Multiply to fall by the wayside.

The budgeting elements of Multiply were however going to be sustained by a few:

- Derventio will continue with their budgeting course for any residents going into arrears on their service charges.
- DHA will use some of the budgeting modules with their economically inactive clients on other programmes they are running for them.
 - Other elements of running Multiply will also be sustained across delivery partners:
 - Addressing the 'language of maths' first when teaching any form of maths to ESL learners.
 - The value of taking a creative approach to learning and using this to help upskill learners and improve their confidence. Artcore in particular have been inspired through Multiply to continue using creative techniques to help embed other learning and skills.

5. Greater London Authority case study

5.1. Case study context

Fieldwork for the Greater London Authority (GLA) case study was completed between the 30th of August and the 26th of November 2024, during Year 3 of Multiply delivery. A total of nine interviews were conducted, five with stakeholders from the GLA and four with Multiply providers.

GLA is an urban Mayoral Strategic Authority. It had a large Multiply budget of £40,945,591 during the three years of the programme. It was selected as a case study due to its success in delivering the Multiply programme, use of innovative measures to market Multiply, engagement with community organisations, and ability to engage hard-to-reach audiences with interventions.

5.2. Topline summary

5.2.1. Design and implementation

The Multiply programme was designed and implemented specifically to build on existing infrastructure and mobilise quickly. Delivery was subcontracted out to 54 further education (FE) colleges and local authority adult services, all of whom had a relationship with the GLA prior to Multiply. Here, delivery was limited to further education (FE) colleges and local authority services based on analysis of where maths teaching resources were already concentrated in London. Allocations to these providers was based on analysis conducted on the number of qualifications they previously delivered and maths attainment data to ensure a proportional spread across areas within the GLA. There was also a dedicated provider manager who carried out quarterly performance management meetings with each provider and worked with them to find solutions where needed. The GLA organised regular roundtables and webinars and sent out bulletins to provide updates to providers and facilitate peer learning.

5.2.2. Promotion

The GLA promoted the Multiply programme through the London Multiply Roadshow, community outreach, and marketing activities organised by individual providers. The London Multiply Roadshow consisted of a series of free, family-friendly events, including maths-related taster activities for providers to directly engage potential learners. The Roadshow was supported by a London-wide media campaign with advertising on billboards, buses, and on websites alongside the use of influencer marketing. The GLA also worked with 34 community organisations who received grants to make referrals to adult education, including on Multiply courses. On top of this, the individual providers that

the GLA worked with also carried out their own marketing to attract learners. The GLA supported these providers with guidance on communication channels and templates to use.

5.2.3. Satisfaction

There was a high degree of satisfaction among both the Local Area (LA) stakeholders and providers interviewed. This was driven by elements of Multiply's design (non-substantive provision, lack of exams, range of interventions) and its delivery (flexibility in curriculum design, accessible locations). Successful delivery was driven by delivering 'maths by stealth' interventions focused on fun, interactive activities; having programme management that was responsive to providers' needs; as well as a multi-pronged communications campaign. On the other hand, the administrative burden and mixed success working with influencers (to market Multiply) and employers were barriers.

Providers reported positive outcomes for learners and their organisations. They noted that learners had increased their confidence, made progress onto other education or employment and had improved life skills. Internally, Multiply had fostered new relationships with community organisations and allowed providers to upskill staff.

5.2.4. Sustainability

Findings indicate that sustainability of the interventions beyond the funding period was a key consideration. GLA's community outreach programme was part-funded by Multiply and designed to continue beyond the life of the programme while maintaining a focus on numeracy. **LA stakeholders also reported plans to apply the flexible delivery methods** (understood as the freedom for providers to design their own courses as long as they fit the intervention and providing non-regulated courses) **of Multiply to other programmes** and were in discussions with the Department for Education (DfE) about UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF).

5.3. Strategic overview

5.3.1. Background to local area

Greater London is a diverse region comprising 32 boroughs and the City of London, with a total population of approximately 9 million. Since 2019, adult education has been devolved to the Greater London Authority (GLA). While the capital's economy is strong, there are also inequalities, and adult numeracy levels are low in some areas.

5.3.2. Multiply alignment with wider strategic objectives

The GLA Multiply programme aligned closely with the Greater London Authority's (GLA) strategic objectives by addressing the key priorities outlined below:

Improving adult skills and employment opportunities

The Skills for Londoners Strategy sets out the Mayor's overarching vision for skills development and outlines the ambitions for ensuring that all Londoners have the opportunity to participate in lifelong learning and progress into good work.¹² By improved numeracy skills, Multiply helps individuals manage everyday tasks, support their children's education, and access better employment opportunities.

Promoting equality and inclusion

The Mayor's Equality Objectives aim to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity across London.¹³ This aligned with Multiply's support for underrepresented groups including parents, care leavers, and individuals with experience in the criminal justice system.

Community engagement and outreach

The GLA has a community outreach programme (part funded by Multiply) designed to raise awareness of adult skills opportunities. Through this programme, 34 community organisations received grants to refer potential learners to adult education courses (including Multiply), working with a wide range of audiences, including those who are furthest away from learning opportunities (e.g. people with negative experiences with adult education, those seeking asylum or those impacted by the cost-of-living crisis).

"The programme is designed to engage with them in a multitude of ways... so that the most distant Londoners are aware of the adult learning opportunities. Last year was a very clear push on London Multiply, the numeracy element." – *GLA stakeholder*

5.3.3. Stakeholder feedback on design

Stakeholders expressed positive views on the design of Multiply, particularly noting the flexibility in letting providers design their own courses as long as they fit the intervention (for example basing courses around cooking to increase confidence with numbers) and

¹² https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sfl_strategy_final_june_20186.pdf

¹³ [The Mayor's Equality Objectives \(2022\) | London City Hall](#)

ability to deliver non-regulated courses to attract learners who were not interested in, or were intimidated by, studying to obtain a qualification.

A repeated concern raised was about the lack of additional funding, as they would have liked to expand their offer further, and overall uncertainty about future funding, stating that this insecurity affected the ability to invest in longer-term provision.

Finally, stakeholders suggested that DfE could have played a stronger national role in supporting shared learning between areas, indicating a gap in the programme's overarching design and coordination.

5.4. Programme set up

5.4.1. Programme design

Strategic leads highlighted that:

- **Delivery was limited to further education (FE) colleges and local authority adult services.** This decision was based on analysis of where maths teaching resources were already concentrated in London.
- **The broader community outreach programme implemented in the GLA and part-funded by Multiply played a key role in engaging learners.** Community organisations delivering this programme were responsible, through their outreach activity, aimed to draw target audience groups into adult education courses, including Multiply.
- **They considered local need carefully.** Allocations to providers were based on analysis including the number of qualifications previously delivered and maths attainment data. This was intended to ensure a proportional spread across areas and match providers' capacities to local need.
- **Specific teams were set up to manage different elements of Multiply delivery.** There were two Multiply teams within the GLA: (i) **A policy team** that consisted of four members of staff who focused on community engagement (ii) **A delivery team** that consisted of six members of staff who focused on providers and overall performance – this included a dedicated manager for each provider, with three provider managers in total.

5.4.2. Partner engagement

- **A limited procurement process enabled quick set up and delivery:** The GLA ran a limited procurement process with a grant award process based on a specification, inviting all providers who could deliver to express interest. This

quick procurement process, it was felt, helped them to get up and running quickly.

- **Provider managers carried out regular monitoring of provider targets and performance.** Quarterly performance management meetings with each provider to check that they were meeting targets and were able to spend their allocation. If a provider was struggling, meetings became more frequent (quarterly to monthly) for closer oversight and to find solutions. In the rare cases when all options had been exhausted without improvement, reduced or reallocation of funding was considered. Providers were sample-checked for evidence that learning was taking place and lessons were observed live in cases of concern.
- **GLA organised platforms for regular sharing of learnings across providers.** The GLA also organised activities / channels that provided updates to providers and facilitated peer learning. These included (i) **Roundtables** – Quarterly in-person themed events, themed that focused on topics selected based on provider feedback (ii) **Webinars** – Quarterly sessions focused on ensuring compliance (e.g. highlighting deadlines) and case studies (iii) **Bulletins** – shared fortnightly and also used to share best practice and raise concerns.

“We hold a round table, an in-person event, every quarter focusing on key issues that providers have reported to us. We also run a provider webinar every quarter on the main points of the programme, any data submission deadlines, that sort of thing – practical nuts and bolts stuff – as well as introducing case studies.” – *GLA stakeholder*

5.4.3. Employer engagement

Stakeholders from the GLA did not highlight any initiatives that they carried out directly with employers. In the area, employer engagement was carried out through the providers. Stakeholders, however, were aware of the progress that providers were making with employers and what the barriers were on account of their close relationships with these providers.

Providers adopted different approaches to engaging employers. For example, some reported cold calling, leaflets and approaching organisations at business parks. One also highlighted being present at NHS job fairs and tailoring the numeracy offer to what was required for jobs at the NHS. Stakeholders also mentioned their representatives being present at staff rooms in local hospitals.

When engaging with employers, one provider emphasised the importance of tailored interventions. Here, they detailed the success they had had with schools and nurseries in the area which enabled them to reach out to Teaching Assistants who did not have Level 2 qualifications. The provider created a tailored course that could be delivered during the weekly training sessions at the school. Additionally, the school also connected them with parent groups that they were able to reach out to. They also felt that the schools and nurseries, being smaller settings, were more open to courses like Multiply in comparison to bigger organisations

The provider manager interviewed (who therefore had oversight over multiple providers) explained that providers who had good pre-existing relationships with employers were most successful, and provided examples of helpful approaches such as offering a combination of in-person and online courses or offering intensive, shorter compact courses to make it easier for learners to attend.

5.4.4. Communications and outreach

Events

The GLA ran the London Multiply Roadshow - a significant outreach initiative supported by a £1 million investment. One strand of the London Multiply Roadshow was a series of free, family-friendly events held across London that raised awareness of the London Multiply programme and encouraged Londoners to take up numeracy courses. The events were run by an external event agency (Sparq) and took place in both high-footfall locations (such as shopping centres) and community organisations (for example at informal gatherings like coffee meetups):

- Events often included interactive, maths-related activities to attract attention; for example, to introduce conversations about proportions, there was a smoothie bike that blended fruit when pedalled and gave the person a free smoothie at the end.
- Multiply also had stands at large, pre-organised events like city fairs. Providers were invited to attend and engage directly with potential learners; where they could not attend, Sparq staff gathered contact details to pass on to them.
- At the time of the interview, 3,000 people had engaged at roadshow events and 650 people had shared contact information to be referred to Multiply providers.

Media campaign

The other strand of the London Multiply Roadshow was a London-wide media campaign. The GLA worked with a marketing agency (Mobas) to give Multiply a clear visual identity that showed advertising on billboards, buses / bus stops, as banners on websites and played as adverts on radio and Spotify, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Multiply billboards



GLA also worked with Sparq to secure influencers to advertise Multiply events and courses on social media (Instagram, TikTok and X). Most had small followings and were chosen based on their local relevance or ties to particular learner groups (e.g. care leavers) or topics (e.g. money management).

Community outreach

As part of the GLA's community outreach programme, 34 community organisations received grants to make referrals to adult education, including Multiply courses. They used a wide range of methods to reach learners, including door knocking, phone calls, coffee mornings, knitting clubs and placing adverts in local media. At the time of interview, this programme had made over 4,000 referrals into adult learning, 1,500 of which were to Multiply.

“The community outreach programme is designed to engage with learners in a multitude of ways - it can be from coffee mornings to one-to-one telephone calls – to make the most under-represented Londoners aware of the adult learning opportunities available.” - *GLA stakeholder*

Providers' own marketing

Providers did their own marketing to attract learners and received guidance from the GLA on communication channels and templates to use. Providers used a range of methods, from social media, flyers and newsletters to going out to local organisations such as debt advice hubs, food banks, DWP officers and parents' forums. Some marketed Multiply to their existing learners, such as those enrolled in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes. Guidance from GLA (shown in Figure 3) suggested wording

for providers to use and asked providers to use the relevant hashtag, tag the Mayor of London and include a link to relevant content (see Figure 4).

Figure 3: Excerpt from stakeholder communications pack

Social Media

Please use the hashtag **#LondonMultiply** in all digital communications promoting the London Multiply programme and tag **@MayorofLondon** where possible.

Please ensure that a relevant link is included with each post below (e.g. your own web pages or press coverage).

The London Multiply programme can help you get the numeracy confidence and skills needed to access good work or further learning. #LondonMultiply
Want to take your career to the next level? If you're aged 19 and over and don't have a numeracy qualification, you can access free numeracy skills training through the London Multiply programme. #LondonMultiply
Do numbers make you feel nervous? The #LondonMultiply programme offers free numeracy courses... Find the right course for you.
Multiply helps Londoners to use maths in their everyday life. There are 300 free numeracy courses ranging from short, flexible courses in money management to career focused courses. Learn more about how Multiply can help you.

Figure 4: X posts by providers



5.5. Programme delivery

5.5.1. Delivery model

The programme was designed and implemented specifically to build on existing infrastructure and mobilise quickly. Delivery of courses was subcontracted out to 54 further education (FE) colleges and local authority adult services, all of whom had a relationship with the GLA prior to Multiply.

All 10 interventions were delivered across providers.¹⁴

5.5.2. Tracking learner engagement

The GLA tracked learner engagement at a programme level through formal data, such as the ILR, but also through qualitative means such as case studies and discussions with providers. In addition to having to submit reports to the GLA, some providers tracked learner engagement by keeping logs of learner attendance across sessions and following up if needed. They also informally monitored learner confidence and progress. Only anecdotal evidence was available on learner progression after Multiply; none of the providers interviewed had systematically tracked this.

5.5.3. Facilitators to delivery

Maths by stealth

The introduction to maths in a ‘stealthy’ way was key to the attraction of new learners and improved learning confidence. Providers achieved this through the delivery of content in a fun, engaging formats and through a rebrand of the subject through creative marketing and outreach.

Games and interactive activities were widely used to reduce the fear associated with maths and encourage participation in a more informal, pressure-free environment. For example, one provider ran an immersive murder mystery event in partnership with Age UK, that simulated a crime scene with clues. Learners used maths skills to solve numerical problems such as calculating the weight of the body, the number of people required to move the body, the diameter of the wound and the amount of blood lost. This provider described it as one of their most popular activities, and a prime example of how learners who typically dislike maths could be drawn in through storytelling, role-play, and collaborative problem-solving.

“Our biggest take away has been the gamification of the subject. You turn it into a game and it becomes so interactive and hands-on that I think that people forget the structure and confines of a classroom after a while and they start to ease up and enjoy what they’re learning.” - *Provider*

Many providers reported success in embedded numeracy in courses like floristry, sewing or hairdressing, as it allowed learners to build skills indirectly and in practical

¹⁴ The Multiply programme offers a menu of numeracy interventions to support local areas to identify the right provision which they can then deliver locally. The menu was based on the barriers that hold people back from addressing their numeracy needs.

contexts. These courses naturally involved ratios, measurements and angles, and therefore created organic opportunities to learn in a relevant and meaningful way that was not perceived as ‘doing maths’.

Making maths less intimidating also depended on how it was communicated. Interactive activities such as the smoothie bike (where individuals could ride a bike to power a bike and mix ingredients) served as conversation starters and helped demystify maths by linking it to everyday actions. Providers tailored their marketing to be inviting and non-intimidating, for example providers described Multiply using the tagline “fun, flexible and free”, or deliberately minimised mentions of ‘maths’ in initial discussions, instead framing discussions in terms of skills to be gained. This helped draw in learners who might have been discouraged by more formal approaches.

“There was often something a bit gimmicky to draw people in but that was vaguely maths related. So one was smoothie bikes and talking about proportions... That was a good draw to the stand.” – *GLA stakeholder*

Supportive programme management

The programme management approach was highly adaptive to individual providers.

Meetings would be face-to-face or online, depending on the level of support needed for each provider. If a provider underperformed, meetings became more frequent (moving from quarterly to monthly) to enable closer oversight and to find solutions. Solutions included giving the providers access to the GLA’s networks and resources (e.g. employer networks) and thoroughly reviewing and adapting approaches. For example, using more non-substantive provision to engage hard to reach learners with taster sessions. In cases of continued underperformance, the GLA reduced funding or reallocated it from less successful to more successful providers, which in turn allowed the GLA to adapt to local demand variability and maximise impact.

The provider manager highlighted that the GLA avoided micromanaging delivery and opted instead for a trust-based model. They felt that too much intrusion could damage relationships since Multiply providers already had a relationship with the GLA, which is what enabled a trust-based model. This meant that providers felt comfortable to be transparent about their capacities and voluntary reductions in funding or targets were allowed provided they aligned with the GLA’s broader investment plan.

“What’s really thriving and important in East London isn’t the same in South London. We were able to adapt and adjust plans in order to maximise delivery.” - *GLA stakeholder*

The provider manager at the GLA explained that when some providers struggled with specific interventions, roundtables and webinars helped them connect with better-performing peers. The provider manager felt that this led to improved delivery and more consistent performance across providers. This sentiment was echoed by providers themselves who reported finding them useful to hear about best practice (e.g. effective curriculum and engagement strategies), receive policy updates and gain a broader perspective on delivery across London.

“I really enjoy going to the roundtables... sharing with other providers, sharing the good news and strategies. In addition to the round table in-person, there are regular webinars as well.” - *Provider*

Multi-pronged communication strategy

The delivery of Multiply in London was underpinned by a multi-pronged communication strategy designed to raise awareness, build trust, and engage learners from a wide range of communities. This strategy combined centrally funded outreach efforts with localised marketing and community engagement by providers. The collective impact of this approach was instrumental; at the time of interview, the London Multiply website had received over one million visitors.

Visibility and reach were significantly enhanced by the combination of mass media, digital advertising, and high-footfall events. City-wide promotion via billboards, online platforms, and radio raised general awareness of Multiply across London, while roadshow events introduced the programme in informal, public-facing settings. This blend of channels ensured broad exposure and sparked curiosity, even among adults who had no prior intention of joining a course.

Trust-building and cultural relevance were achieved through local partnerships and community engagement. Multiply events delivered in collaboration with community organisations helped create safe, familiar spaces where learners felt comfortable exploring the idea of returning to education. For example, entire cohorts were recruited through local Tamil and Somali groups where existing trust helped reduce apprehension. Providers noted particularly strong uptake when activities were facilitated by trusted figures in the community or when courses were delivered through known institutions such as schools, housing groups, or cultural centres. Influencers also offered a way to connect with people who would not typically think of themselves as ‘learners’ and who might not have responded to standard methods like flyers.

“We had one event with a Tamil community group and as a result of that, a whole Multiply course ran with the Tamil community group... The success we saw there really came when the community organisation was trusted and embedded, and the facilitator was someone who made it feel like a safe space.” - *GLA stakeholder*

Finally, providers’ own marketing and outreach helped translate interest into action.

Adapted messaging and formats to suit specific learner groups was key in converting awareness into enrolment.

Pockets of success in engaging employers

Existing relationships were key to engaging employers. Where providers had ongoing relationships with employers and were already providing them with courses, they had some success in engaging them on Multiply.

Short courses either provided onsite or online proved to be more effective. With limited time for staff, providers tailored the offer for employers and provided courses either at the organisation or online, which they felt was effective. Additionally, tailoring the course to the needs of the organisation was also key. For example, numeracy skills for a barista to enable them to check volumes of liquids, etc.

Smaller organisations were found to be more likely to engage with providers on Multiply. A GLA stakeholder highlighted that it was more likely that smaller organisations would engage with providers as the larger organisations had their own in-house training plans.

(It must be noted that challenges were also highlighted by providers with regard to engaging employers on Multiply – this has been captured in Section 5.5.5)

5.5.4. Barriers to delivery

Administrative burden

One of the most consistently cited barriers across providers was the administrative burden and complexity associated with data reporting and compliance. While robust monitoring was understood to be necessary for transparency and accountability, the volume and intricacy of reporting requirements often strained provider capacity and distracted from core delivery. Many found it time-consuming to provide returns disaggregated by intervention type and course format and to ensure that learners completed paperwork adequately. One provider remarked that they had run successful activities but were unable to count a significant portion of learners in formal returns due to incomplete paperwork.

“Our biggest project is really paperwork, making sure that people complete the paperwork properly. We worked with a Somali group, which was great, but because we couldn’t get the paperwork we only got maybe a third of the numbers. It’s because of the client group that we’re dealing with who aren’t used to kind of academic-style arrangements.” - *Provider*

Mixed success with social media influencers

While some influencer content was impactful, other influencers failed to connect directly with the programme’s core messages, and offered broad motivational content that lacked clear reference to Multiply or producing posts that were off-message. The stakeholder leading the work commented that it was challenging to get sign off on posts because they went to the Mayor’s office and involved many drafts. They stated that it was challenging because influencers liked to be creative with what they posted, which, at times, contrasted the more bureaucratic nature of the GLA. There were also misunderstandings about Multiply among influencers (for example some talked about it as if it was an online programme). As a result, managing influencer partnerships demanded significant input from GLA staff to review, revise and approve content.

“We tried to use community influencers and TikTok influencers – some were great and some less so... Some of them did things that were more about general positivity than about Multiply.” - *GLA stakeholder*

Challenges in engaging employers

GLA stakeholders highlighted that where previous relationships with employers did not exist, the providers struggled to engage them. This required a lot more time investment from the provider to identify the right people at the organisation and start to establish a relationship. In many cases, providers lacked the time or networks to cultivate them from scratch within the delivery timeframe.

Lack of awareness of Multiply amongst employers also acted as a barrier. Some providers highlighted that awareness of the programme was limited and thus employers were less willing to engage.

Providers noted challenges in aligning course structures and schedules with the demands of the workplace. For employees in low-wage or shift-based roles, their ability to attend regular maths courses was often impractical without strong employer backing or built-in flexibility, neither of which was reliably in place. One provider who had planned to

deliver intervention C (innovative numeracy programmes delivered together with employers) was not able to do so as they were not successful in engaging any employers.

“Some employers do not want to release their employees to attend these courses because they’ve got a business to run. Some providers have found it very difficult to even break through the barrier of that first conversation with employers, and they’ve just shut them off completely.” - *GLA stakeholder*

5.5.5. Opportunities for innovation

The use of social media influencers was a unique marketing innovation from the GLA. Influencers had small but engaged followings which meant that they could be secured with a limited budget to target specific communities. Although success was mixed, the campaign was a bold experiment in marketing that led to learnings about how to work with influencers to engage hard-to-reach groups. The Multiply programme also allowed providers to support learners more closely than in other adult learning contexts, for example through non-substantive provision or small classes that allowed for the time to talk to potential learners one-on-one to understand their fears.

5.5.6. Value for money perspective

The GLA’s programme management approach helped ensure that investment aligned with impact through active monitoring, support and reallocation of resources where necessary. Stakeholders highlighted the organized approach to managing providers at the GLA. Provider managers, regular structured communication and monitoring were said to be key elements of the approach. Multiply reporting requirements, though administratively challenging for some providers, ensured that every aspect of spending was documented and tracked. If one provider underperformed in a particular intervention, resources were shifted to those who demonstrated higher effectiveness in that area. Providers also engaged in voluntary reductions and returned unspent funds or revised targets when they anticipated underspending. These decisions, facilitated by transparent, collaborative performance management where multiple support options were explored before any funding was reallocated, avoided waste and redirected funds to interventions with demonstrated demand. Existing relationships between the GLA and providers also made the process smoother, as there was already a foundation of trust to build on.

5.6. Satisfaction with Multiply

5.6.1. Overall satisfaction

GLA and delivery stakeholders expressed a high degree of satisfaction with Multiply and many were disappointed that the programme was coming to an end. Satisfaction was driven by several elements of Multiply:

- **Non-substantive provision** as it allowed providers to engage learners in a low-pressure way and reduced entry barriers.
- **Lack of exams** because it made Multiply more approachable, particularly for those with previous negative experiences of education.
- **Range of interventions** as it allowed providers to meet local needs.

One provider observed that Multiply was so wide-ranging that it almost lacked clear parameters, but at the same time he praised the flexibility as an advantage because it allowed Multiply to be used creatively for a wide range of groups.

5.6.2. Satisfaction with delivery and contents

Delivery approaches under Multiply were widely praised. Stakeholders consistently highlighted how the programme allowed for flexibility on curriculum design and therefore enabled staff to align teaching with learners' needs and make content relevant to real life. For example, one provider embedded numeracy into ESOL courses where learners practised reading receipts, prescriptions, and measurements, which linked literacy and numeracy development in ways that supported real-life application. The ability to deliver outside of traditional classroom settings, including informal settings such as libraries or schools or remotely, was also appreciated for making learning more accessible.

“A lot of these people either don't really want to engage with formal authorities or don't want to go back into the classroom setting. The reason why they're on the Multiply course is because they weren't necessarily large fans of doing that in the first place, so being able to deliver elsewhere is... really effective.” - *GLA stakeholder*

5.7. Outcomes and impact

5.7.1 Learners

There was a strong sentiment that Multiply had achieved positive outcomes for learners. One of the most consistent outcomes reported across all provider interviews was a significant increase in learner confidence with numeracy, which was anecdotally reported by providers or practitioners, as well as being tracked in some courses by learner surveys. Multiply's non-assessed, low-pressure format helped learners gradually rebuild their self-belief. This increased confidence was reported to have led to better management of daily tasks (such as budgeting or cooking), as well as progression onto further learning and employment. For example, a community interest company who support women with complex barriers to employment reported that learners came out better able to manage money and support their children with homework and that they were taking steps towards further learning or employment despite never having worked in the UK before.

“None of these women had ever worked in the UK before and now lots of them are making very real steps towards that... it was Multiply that got that ball rolling.” - *GLA stakeholder*

While it had made learners more confident with numbers specifically (with several going from maths anxiety to taking maths GCSEs and one even enrolled in an engineering degree), it was also seen to have made them more confident with learning or stepping outside of their comfort zone more generally. One provider who delivered a healthy eating course saw half of their participants – many of whom had not left their housing estate before – progress onto courses at the local college, while another emphasised that learners had become less isolated as they made friends during the Multiply courses. For some, the courses were the first structured group activity they had attended in years. More broadly, strategic stakeholders felt that Multiply had widened access to and participation in education, therefore achieving increased equality of opportunity.

“We've helped people gain their confidence... we've reached out to people who would otherwise be forgotten by education.” - *Provider*

5.7.2 Organisations

There were also outcomes on an organisational level. Multiply strengthened relationships between colleges, local authorities, community groups, and charities. These partnerships improved referral pathways and some relationships became permanent fixtures in local delivery models, for example an established ongoing collaboration with

libraries or schools. Further, providers were able to upskill their staff by training non-maths tutors to deliver Multiply, therefore Multiply had broadened their delivery capacity.

“We now have working relationships with libraries, schools and even sheltered housing schemes we never worked with before.” - *Provider*

5.8. Future plans

The GLA considered Multiply’s legacy at the very start of the programme, and highlighted that the community outreach programme will outlive Multiply and retain a numeracy focus. GLA stakeholders reported that they will carry over flexible delivery methods into other areas such as English and digital skills and are in discussions with DfE about UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF). While providers mentioned incorporating learnings (e.g. teaching using games) into other courses and plans to continue working with community organisations, they were uncertain about the future of Multiply courses specifically.

6. Gloucestershire County Council case study

6.1. Case study context

Fieldwork for the Gloucestershire County Council case study was completed between the 20th of August and the 28th of October 2024, during Year 3 of Multiply delivery. A total of eight interviews were conducted with stakeholders from the LA.

Gloucestershire is a predominantly rural, upper-tier LA, based in the South West. It had a small budget of £2,742,441 during the three years of the Multiply programme. It was selected as a case study due to its strong partnership with employer organisations, work with National Numeracy, and use of innovation in its outreach and provision.

6.2. Topline summary

6.2.1 Alignment with local strategic objectives

Multiply aligned with the Gloucestershire Adult Learning department's strategic objectives to improve adult numeracy and address employment gaps. It has helped them to reach more of their diverse and/or rural populations. It has also helped boost learners' confidence, helped more learners progress towards functional skills exams, and led to wider positive health and social outcomes.

6.2.2. Partnerships

Despite initial challenges with the setup in Year 1, **stakeholders noted strong processes and community links emerging in Year 2, that helped them hit targets and develop good practices that they could carry over into Year 3.** Opportunities to innovate, local partnership working, and new staff hires were cited as key factors in their success.

6.2.3. In-house delivery and grant funding

Interventions in Year 2 were delivered through an even split of in-house delivery and grant funding of local organisations, with geographic allocations for each. Stakeholders appreciated the flexibility of the design as they could iteratively trial different ideas and this resulted in a 60:40 split of in-house and grant funded delivery partners in Year 3 once they had refined their approach.

Local Area (LA) stakeholders found it challenging initially to set up their in-house function due to funding delays. A lack of pre-existing processes and community links in their allocated areas compounded this. However, this 'blank canvas' turned out to be a factor in their success. It led delivery teams to take a grassroots approach to community outreach

and forge new local partnerships with food banks, leisure centres, libraries, farms, supermarkets, schools and libraries.

6.2.4 Engaging hard-to-reach audiences

Delivery partners were selected for their experience in engaging hard-to-reach audiences, which included those with learning disabilities and school leavers. LA stakeholders and partners shared positive experiences of working together to deliver Multiply. The LA team's light-touch approach gave tutors and programme leaders freedom to innovate based on the needs of their audience.

Stakeholders provided numerous examples of innovative delivery methods. One highlight included a maths and singing course delivered to a learning disability members group, which evolved into a choir that used numeracy to set up their own performance. Another example is the Council's flagship maths and fitness course 'NumberFit' which was rolled out to other leisure centres after proving popular with learners. Another outcome often highlighted is the collaboration with National Numeracy to create a Local Champions Network. This had involved setting up pathways with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and local schools to train teaching and job centre staff to identify and refer potential learners.

6.2.5 Employer partnerships

Stakeholders' experiences of employer partnerships were more mixed. They reported positive outcomes from their partnership with Ringway, that delivered bespoke courses to highway workers. Having a dedicated lead on both sides working together to identify learners at local depots was considered key to its success and subsequent award nominations. However, other providers struggled to engage employers and get the buy-in needed.

Other challenges related to funding allocations. Stakeholders would also have liked more time for delivery once they got their processes up and running. In future, they would like to be able to roll over unused funds and would like DfE to consider a longer programme period of 5 years to allow them to maximise their outcomes.

6.2.6 Legacy

Stakeholders described Multiply's legacy as having extended beyond Gloucestershire. For instance, their idea of the creation a Local Champions Network has been picked up by other regions. Stakeholders would like to see DfE offering more learning networks and opportunities for comms and education specialists to share learnings, good practice and celebrate their successes.

6.3. Strategic overview

This section outlines Gloucestershire's wider strategic objectives, to what extent Multiply supports these objectives, and stakeholder feedback on programme design.

6.3.1. Background to local area

Gloucestershire County Council administers six local districts in South West England and a total of around 270,000 residents. The county has a varied industrial base and geography, with affluent areas alongside pockets of deprivation in both towns and rural communities – the latter being particularly hard to reach given barriers to opportunities.

“The Cotswolds are quite a hard-to-reach area. It's one of the highest areas for deprivation in Gloucestershire and you wouldn't think that because it [has a reputation of being]is posh.” - *LA strategic stakeholder*

The strategic lead described three main areas Multiply has targeted:

1. **Overall confidence:** Improved confidence using numbers across the county and among the most hard-to-reach and deprived groups.
2. **Education:** Progression of individuals into formal learning, such as qualifications or courses.
3. **Employment:** Increased confidence in the workplace and encouragement of more individuals to go for promotions and to apply for jobs.

6.3.2. Multiply alignment with wider strategic objectives

The strategic lead in Gloucestershire felt that Multiply aligned well with wider strategic objectives because of the tangible impact it has had on the lives of residents. It has helped more individuals progress into education and employment. In addition, stakeholders felt that Multiply supported the Council's strategic aims relating to health and social outcomes such as reduced social isolation and support for healthier lifestyles.

“Improving confidence across the county using numbers is one of the outcomes of the programme, and that's something that I think we are achieving because we've got evidence of a lot of case studies that we're working up of people that have said to us it's changed their lives. It has given them confidence to actually go for promotion and do their formal qualifications.” - *LA strategic stakeholder*

Multiply has been integrated into the Adult Learning Department's delivery approach to help expand in-house and external partnerships. Internally, it has allowed the team to bring in new learning coordinators and tutors, as well as set up community outreach hubs and referral pathways within local food banks, libraries, schools and job centres.

In addition, around 50% of Gloucestershire's delivery budget has been provided to external partners to bring in more resources to trial innovative approaches to engaging new learners including:

- Those unemployed
- Manual workers
- Those with learning disabilities
- Single/young parents
- Care sector employees
- Deprived populations
- Veterans
- People recovering from abuse or drug and alcohol addictions.

This dual approach to target hard-to-reach groups was aligned with broader strategic objectives to expand the Adult Education Department's partnership links, increase awareness of its provisions, and bring in new learners.

The investment plan¹⁵ covered all interventions but primarily focused on:

1. Courses designed to increase confidence with numbers for those needing the first steps towards formal numerical qualifications.
2. Numeracy activities, courses or provision designed in partnership with community organisations and other partners aimed at engaging the hardest to reach learners, for example those not in the labour market or other groups identified locally as in need.

6.3.3. Stakeholder feedback on design

Stakeholders highlighted the importance of iterative design. Multiply was perceived positively because it gave LA stakeholders and partners 'free rein' to trial new course

¹⁵ Each LA completed an investment plan for Multiply. This set out funding allocations for each year and key targets including the number of initiatives rolled out and number of enrolments under each of the 10 intervention types.

ideas or engagement activities that had not been done before. This process helped delivery teams to refine and scale up the most impactful initiatives.

"It's a process of trying something out, seeing what resonates for people and then using that to soundboard other ideas that you could do that are practical and have an impact." - *LA delivery team*

Key learnings for the LA's delivery team that came out of this process were:

- **Not over-planning a new curriculum idea before seeing if it was attracting learners.** For instance, they designed a course using 'fake news' as a hook to learn about numeracy which they thought would be popular, but it did not get the footfall.
- **Getting feedback iteratively from learners helped to create a core offering that can be scaled up in other locations.** Several stakeholders gave the example of 'NumberFit'; a course which taught numeracy skills in a local gym. They refined the curriculum and approach based on learner feedback each time they ran it before replicating it in other leisure centres.

Council stakeholders also discovered that the criteria for eligibility did not capture all potential learners in the first year of the scheme as they could not include those with level 2 qualifications in Maths.¹⁶ They noted that Multiply's offering attracted those who have previous qualifications such as a Maths GCSE but who have been out of employment. For example, delivery stakeholders who ran local outreach activities at schools and food banks met stay-at-home mums and professionals with long-term health conditions who were interested in Multiply courses. This was because they were looking for a confidence boost to get back into work but did not qualify for AEB provision.

"People were coming forward that had a Maths GCSE but had just been out of work for so long. They just needed an opportunity to brush up their skills." - *LA delivery team*

¹⁶ DfE then expanded the eligibility criteria of the Multiply programme in the second year to include those with L2 maths qualifications if a skills assessment determined they had functional maths skills below L2 and Multiply would help them progress into work, in their career, or on to higher levels of training.

6.4. Programme set-up

6.4.1. Collaborations and partnerships

Around 50% of the Council's provision in Year 2 was delivered by sub-contractors. The other 50% was delivered by their in-house team in a variety of local community venues, by having developed outreach activities and set up referral pathways with other public and voluntary sector services.

Commissioned providers

The Council commissioned providers already delivering learner provision under AEB. All had submitted initial expressions of interest in Year 1 and were selected based on their expertise in engaging hard-to-reach groups by teaching numeracy skills using contextual or art-based methods.

Providers fed back that due to the late commissioning in Year 1 and initial time spent on outreach, delivery tended to only 'get going' in Year 2. They utilised existing networks to identify relevant learners and expanded their curriculum to offer innovative approaches to teaching numeracy. In some cases, providers also hired new staff to expand their delivery capacity.

Two key providers were interviewed:

1. Prospect training solutions (PTS)

The Council funded PTS for two contracts. Their main contract required them to deliver 4-day courses to unemployed school leavers (aged 19+). A second, smaller contract aimed to deliver courses to employees via local employers Morrisons and NHS. Numeracy skills were taught through practical examples such as money management and energy bill exercises.

2. Art Shape

Art Shape are a national charity running arts courses to improve employability with a specific focus on disabled learners and social inclusion. They were an existing partner of the Council, commissioned to develop new approaches to engaging disenfranchised groups. Their courses taught numeracy skills and language in combination with the arts, for instance, sewing, singing and upcycling.

Other providers the Council commissioned to engage hard-to-reach groups were:

- Bespoke mentoring (care leavers)
- Artspace Cinderford (disability)
- NCLP (single/young parents)

- Gloucester Gateway Trust (veterans)
- Cotswold Community Fund (deprived parts of the LA)
- Cheltenham Borough Homes (deprived parts of the LA)
- Creative Sustainability (vulnerable groups).

In-house delivery

The LA delivery team followed a similar process to providers and did most of the setup in Year 1 and early Year 2 before starting to deliver. This required a long lead time as Multiply's in-house provisions needed to be set up afresh and clearly demarcated from other Adult Learning provisions. Once funding was received in Year 2, the lead was able to delegate most of the programme management to two newly recruited learning co-ordinators.

“ESOL [English for Speakers of Other Languages] were already doing functional skills so we had to be self-sufficient and find our learners on our own [...], which was quite challenging, but actually I think it's led [to] more creativity.” - *LA delivery team*

Initial set-up did not follow a set process and was more spontaneous. Stakeholders described it as being a 'start-up' style environment with everyone, this included learning co-ordinators and tutors having contributed to ideas. They began by identifying opportunities within their geographic target area to build relationships with local services and understand the needs of the target audience. They also held regular internal brainstorm meetings to discuss possible course ideas and engagement approaches with the team.

“I started volunteering at food banks and really just talking to people in the community, getting them to recognise my face, my name, rather than making it a sales pitch. We had to do it in a different way”. - *LA delivery team*

Other partnerships and collaborations

National Numeracy were brought on to support the LA delivery team in Year 2. They joined at the same time as other recruits, which allowed staff to develop a strong initial rapport and joint vision and work closely to deliver together. This involved internal staff being trained as Numeracy Champions and pilots were run in rural parts of the LA to

engage unemployed learners. National Numeracy and the LA delivery team also met once a month to discuss opportunities and gaps where they could bring on new champions.

Two key pathways were established via:

1. **Schools:** Developed resources to approach schools and identify teaching assistants who could be trained as Numeracy Champions and refer on potential learners.
2. **Job Centre Plus:** Worked with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to signpost work coaches at job centres in target areas and train them to identify and refer potential learners.

6.4.2. Employer engagement

Stakeholders described mixed experiences of setting up employer partnerships due to varying levels of employer buy-in. They marketed Multiply at job fairs and three main employer partnerships were set up in Year 2 using a mixture of in-house delivery capability and external providers.

Ringway

The LA set up a partnership with Ringway, a construction engineering company, in Year 2 after one of the LA Multiply leads met the Training Lead for Ringway at a local job fair. The lack of numeracy skills among highway workers was identified as a concern by Ringway, which led to a joint agreement to trial ways in which Multiply would be delivered in local depots to upskill the workforce.

Stakeholders described a positive set-up experience. Ringway held a meeting where staff had contributed to the curriculum design, which helped ensure the course was designed according to learners' needs. In addition, clear roles were established early on; the LA delivery team would have managed the curriculum design and course delivery and Ringway would have identified staff via internal advertising and directly approaching staff. Both leads also met regularly during the initial setup period.

“We had meetings about designing a programme, bringing in contract managers, supervisors, operatives asking them what they thought would be beneficial. We wanted to make it really relevant. We identified that it's everything from calculating how much material they need to fill a pothole, for example, to filling in their timesheets and their wage slips.” - *Employer*

Prospect Training Solutions (PTS)

The council commissioned PTS, who are one of the providers supporting the LA delivery team, to deliver Multiply courses via employers such as NHS, Morrisons and Ubico. As part of the set-up, managers were asked to identify people who would benefit. A stakeholder described it as a strong route for engaging employees.

Several barriers were highlighted, including challenges in securing time off for staff to attend, high staff turnover and the time required to build relationships with contacts on the employer side. This meant that PTS could only start delivering on their contract in Year 2. While employers provided positive feedback on seeing the outcomes, the challenges with initial engagement led to a decision at the end of Year 2 to end the contract and redirect resources to the school leavers contract.

“The biggest challenge is trying to get any sort of engagement from employers, quite frankly, in terms of their own staff and giving them time away from the shop floor or the office floor. When they're paying for that time, that's difficult.” - *Provider*

6.4.3. Target audience selection

The Council's target audience for Multiply was defined as anyone aged 19+ who did not have a Maths GSCE at grade 4/C or equivalent (including Level 2 Functional Skills, O Level Grade C). In prospectuses and at engagement events, those eligible were offered access to free numeracy courses through Multiply to build confidence and gain a qualification.

Each delivery team took a different approach to audience selection, depending on their internal processes, expertise and geographic footprint. Providers often drew on their existing networks to reach target audiences. For instance, ArtSpace and Artshape had strong links to local disability and mental health networks and PTS had the existing resources to target school leavers. The Council's in-house approach was more experimental and used engagement activities as tools to explore and refine their target audience within the regional areas that were not already covered by ESOL and functional skills courses.

6.4.4. Facilitators to programme set-up

The key facilitators to set-up were light-touch management, developing strong relationships, using existing networks and being adaptive in designing the curriculum.

Existing networks

While the start of Year 2 was seen as challenging, using existing networks often helped delivery teams to reach new learners. One provider who reached out to membership

groups felt that this worked better than approaching individuals at job fairs. The engagement of whole groups in new courses was seen as more cost-effective than selectively recruiting individuals onto courses.

Light touch management

Provider and employer stakeholders fed back that the level of involvement from Multiply was appropriate. Stakeholders saw the Council as being responsive to issues while also letting teams manage the process of identifying and engaging learners in the way they saw fit. This included keeping paperwork light touch so that it did not overburden learners and discourage them from engaging.

Strong relationships

Strong relationships with one consistent touchpoint helped the Council to establish strong partnerships. An example of this is Ringway, where a strong relationship with the employer's learning coordinator and mutual buy-in helped drive the success of Multiply as both sides were invested in making it work and overcoming barriers.

Being adaptive

A key facilitator was having a bespoke curriculum which could be adapted to fit the needs of learners. Stakeholders regularly fed back the value of consulting tutors and learners before, as well as throughout courses so that content could be refined based on ongoing feedback. They also often commented on the importance of being flexible in when and where courses were run to maximise engagement. For instance, an employer stakeholder praised the Council's delivery team for its flexibility to deliver courses to avoid overlapping with 'high-workload' periods.

"The tutors are really hands-on with development of the courses we run and they adapt them as and when we need." - *LA strategic stakeholder*

6.4.5. Barriers to programme set-up

Funding delays in Year 1

The primary barrier to set-up was the funding delays in Year 1. Stakeholders felt that the slow start led to delays in implementation in Year 2. Although some had existing community links, most were designing their curriculum from scratch and building out local partnerships. This was particularly true for the in-house team who have only just refined their approach heading into Year 3.

Staff turnover

Staffing changes within the Council were also highlighted as a challenge by LA stakeholders. One of the delivery team noted that it took time to find tutors with the right skill set who were willing to participate in learner engagement activities – particularly in the early stages when there was not much course delivery happening.

6.5. Programme delivery

6.5.1. Delivery model

The Council delivered Multiply through an even split of direct delivery and grant funding of local organisations. At the end of Year 2, they decided to move to a 60:40 split of internal and external respectively, having refined their in-house offerings and established a process flow from identifying a location to learner enrolment and course delivery.

Team structure

The Head of Adult Education oversaw Multiply at Gloucestershire County Council. However, their role has evolved in Year 2. Whereas in Year 1 they described being more ‘hands-on’, they have since been able to delegate work and take a step back from programme management to focus on strategy, monitoring and reporting. Two learning coordinators looked after in-house and partner provisions and oversaw the four teaching staff. The department also arranged for a communications expert within the Council to be seconded unofficially onto Multiply to help build out its marketing strategy.

The lead coordinator oversaw programmes across all stages of enrolment, progress, tutor training and delivery partner communication. Another project coordinator had been closely involved in community outreach – although the team culture was described as a collaborative ‘all hands on deck’ environment. The team regularly met to brainstorm and share updates. Tutors and team members responsible for communications were invited to attend engagement activities and support with new ideas for outreach.

Delivery approach

In Year 2, the Council team delivered Multiply through seven different 6-week bootcamps.¹⁷ Their delivery approach followed three steps:

- **Step 1:** Engagement activities ran in community settings to identify potential learners, gauge skill level and introduce them to the course content and tutors.

¹⁷ This is different to Skills Bootcamps run by the DfE.

- **Step 2:** Once a learner completed a course, they were signed onto another of interest.
- **Step 3:** Finally, they were progressed onto a Functional skills preparatory course.

An example of this was 'NumberFit', a course created in partnership with a local gym which, due to its success, was rolled out to other leisure centres in the region. The Council collaborated with gym staff to design a curriculum that combined fitness and numeracy. This was very popular and at the end of the course, learners were encouraged to try some of the other courses on offer.

Courses followed a bespoke approach depending on the audience. For instance, every three months PTS delivered a 4-day course to a new set of school leavers as part of their Multiply provision - whereas the employer provision they delivered for Ringway was 3-4 hours a week of training across 6-8 weeks. Ringway's courses were delivered in ad-hoc 2-hour slots to balance employees' availability with the session aims. In another case, Artspace developed a 10-week programme based around maths and singing, in which each week involved anywhere between 2-5 hours of contact time.

6.5.2. Programme management

The Council described a robust quality assurance process for providers. RARPA (Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement) timelines and templates were used to monitor and review progress throughout the year.¹⁸ This involved:

1. **Walkthrough visits** to sub-contractors and walkthrough forms completed and submitted.
2. **Observations of TLA** (Teaching, Learning and Assessments) following standard processes.
3. **Audit (non-accredited)** of each tutor twice a year which included a review of the lesson plans and learning logs that were submitted.
4. **Audit (sub-contracted)** documentation submitted by the end of each term.
5. **Destination survey** completed by all learners via a phone call from the Adult Education team 3 months after finishing their course and reviewed 6 months afterwards.

¹⁸ RARPA is a tried and tested approach to ensuring the quality of non-accredited learning programmes and learning opportunities within a programme that is in addition to a specific qualification. For many learners with special educational needs, qualifications and accreditation are not appropriate options to support good life outcomes. Learning programmes must be tailored to the individual. When delivered well and quality assured, RARPA provides a structure through which learners can achieve their personalised outcomes and reach their potential.

The strategic lead described how they were more 'hands off' with sub-contractors in Year 1 to give them space to set things up. However, in Year 2 and 3, they had regular ad hoc communication, monthly review meetings and end of year reviews with each provider – which allowed the Council to check in if sub-contractors were not progressing. The lead commented that this open communication approach supported their strong partnerships.

"I have really open conversations with them. I'm quite flexible and understanding because people are human." - *LA strategic stakeholder*

Internally, the Adult Education team created a **process and swim lanes spreadsheet** for programme leads. This included a breakdown of RARPA requirements at each stage (course set-up, initial contact, enrolment, on-programme, end of programme). It also broke down key staff responsibilities, including ILPs (Individual Learning Plans) and enrolment paperwork, health and safety and risk assessments. They have also created a **tutor information sheet** to guide them on process for monitoring and reporting back on learner outcomes and to keep documentation consistent.

6.5.3. Communications and outreach

A mixture of in-person, outdoor and social media advertising was central to spreading the word among local stakeholders and learners.

The Council sent teams out to raise awareness of Multiply at in-person stalls

At the start of Year 2, the in-house team were continuing the local outreach and community engagement activities they had started in Year 1 to attract new learners. Shopping centres, food banks, job fairs and festivals were key sites. Programme coordinators described setting up stalls and chatting to people to gauge the types of learners that might benefit from Multiply (see Figure 5 and Figure 6 on the next page). The benefits of public stalls were they:

- **built initial trust and rapport** with learners who had perhaps had negative experiences in mainstream education and were self-conscious about their lack of numeracy skills
- **identified a broader spectrum of those who would benefit.** For instance, those with qualifications but who wanted to refresh their skills after an employment gap – e.g. stay at home mums, people with long term health conditions who had taken a leave of absence
- **attracted repeat learners and word of mouth referrals** to drive awareness

Figure 5: Public stall at a shopping centre (left), local leisure centre (right)

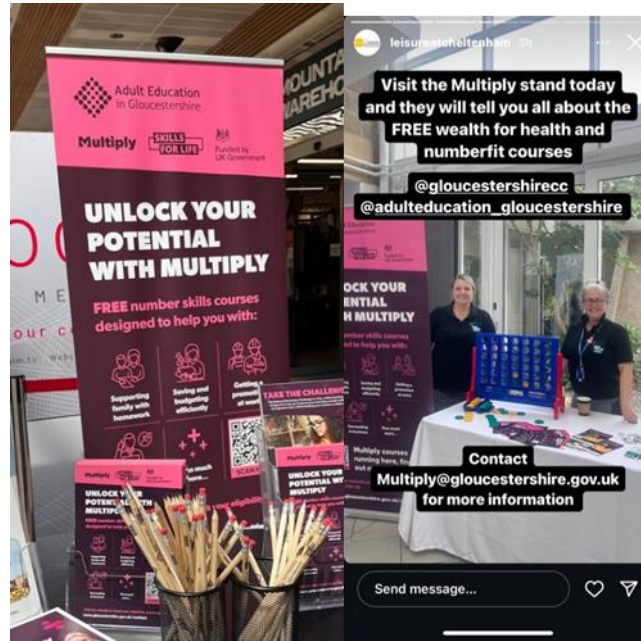


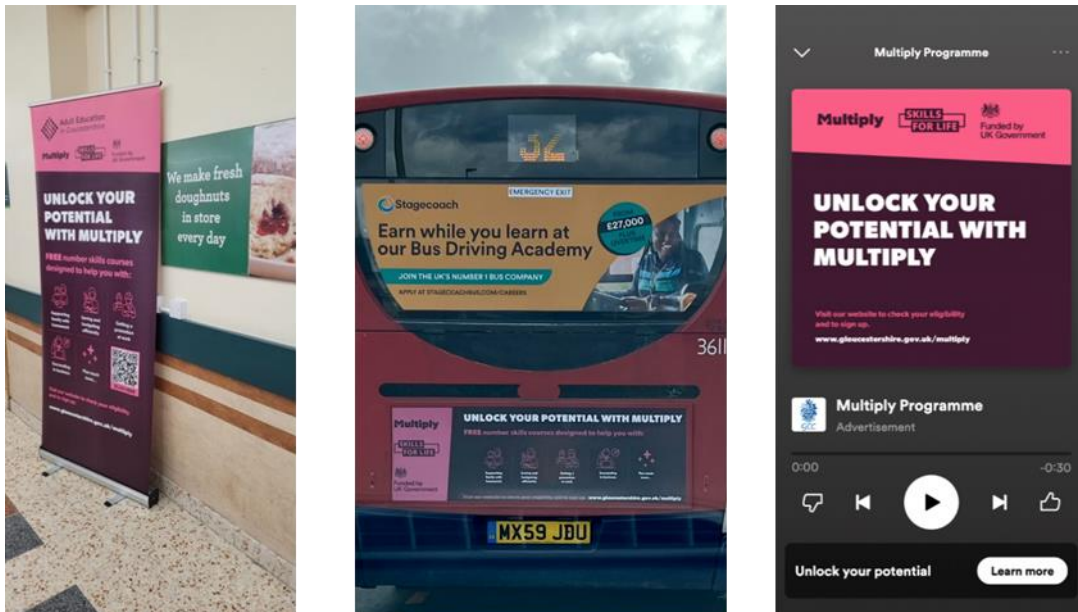
Figure 6: Public stall at Party in the Park Festival



The Council's communications department helped with developing a multi-channel communication strategy for Multiply

A senior digital communications officer developed a marketing plan to help the Adult Learning team raise awareness through social media, billboard and outdoor advertising; and radio advertising (see Figure 7 on the next page). Any online content posted by the Council or stakeholders was tagged with '#MultiplyGlos'. They tracked online statistics and saw engagement with the Council's social media pages increase over the course of Years 2 and 3. This also translated into booked out classes, which helped with marketing in Year 3 as they then could use real-life testimonials from tutors and learners who had completed courses.

Figure 7: Advertising in Morrisons store (left), Bus banner (middle), and Spotify (right)



Local stakeholders also helped to promote Multiply

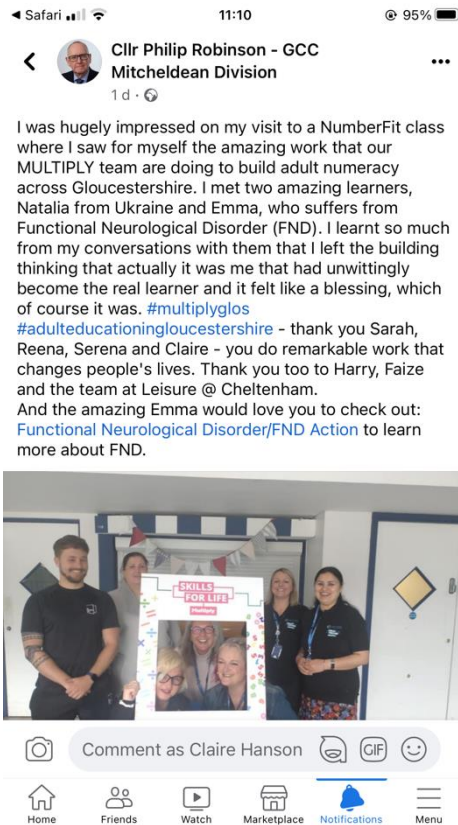
The Council engaged with local councillors by inviting them to attend Multiply activities. This helped to raise awareness of its positive impact. For instance, a councillor who attended a NumberFit course posted on Facebook about the impact it has had on two learners with neurological conditions (see Figure 8). Another example of this is BBC Radio Gloucestershire who gave the Council a slot on their show to talk about Multiply on National Numeracy Day. This helped boost engagement with their online campaign and reach a wider audience.

The team also tapped into National Numeracy resources and provider networks

National Numeracy was a key partner in the development of resources that delivery teams and providers could use to identify potential learners and talk about numeracy support. This model helped engage teaching staff in schools and coaches in job centres, who were then able to identify parents or jobseekers and signpost them to Multiply or onto the Council's adult learning team.

"I don't think our project would have been as successful without National Numeracy's involvement. They've been amazing." - LA strategic stakeholder

Figure 8: Stakeholder promotion on social media



6.5.4. Tracking learner engagement

The Adult Education team provided tutors and delivery partners with a **RARPA document signed** off by the Quality Assurance team. This had summarised requirements at each stage of learner engagement:

1. Quality assurance
2. Initial Assessment
3. Challenging Learning Goals
4. Recording Progress
5. End of Programme Assessment.

To help with this, teaching staff were also provided with a **tutor guidance sheet** with clear steps for monitoring and reporting back on learner outcomes. Paperwork was completed using templates to keep documentation consistent across key reporting requirements:

1. **Initial assessment** summarised each learner's experience, objectives and next steps

2. **Individual Learner Plans** measured metrics on learners' starting goals and the impact of short and long courses on key areas such as numeracy skills and confidence using numbers (see Figure 9). Learners were asked to rate their own ability (bad, poor, ok, good or great) for each task, e.g. budgeting, managing time and following recipes.
3. **Learner spreadsheets** that collated learner information (name, contact, aspirations, confidence, any special needs), course attendance and progression information. Colour-coding helped tutors to identify when learners were ready to move onto their next stage.

Figure 9: Extract from Individual Learning Plan Skill Scan

4. How would you rate your ability to do the following things? Please place X in a box:

Task	Bad	Poor	Ok	Good	Great
Budget for essentials and non-essentials					
Manage your time and priorities					
Follow recipes and convert measurements					
Compare and handle utility bills and other costs					
Monitor your fitness and diet and track progress					
Make plans for holidays or other travels					
Understand sports statistics					
Save money and understand interest rates					
Read transport timetables and plan a journey					
Review your payslip, understand tax and calculate overtime					
Understand receipts					

Sub-contractors also followed this process. They collaborated with the Council to develop materials that could be used to document learner progression. Both provider stakeholders interviewed as part of this case study explained that learners were asked to rate their confidence levels at the start and end of each course. While quantitative metrics worked well, one stakeholder also fed back that they were also obtaining rich qualitative insight into its impact which they planned to embed in more creative ways.

"We've been gathering stories in a more qualitative way... we're going to produce a very visual brochure which can be digital or hard copy which shows what they've all been doing with people's stories and their plans for the future." - *Provider*

6.5.5. Facilitators to delivery

The key facilitators to delivery related to incentives, personalising outreach and marketing materials, induction weeks to speed-up onboarding, and designing and adapting bespoke courses tailored to specific learner groups' needs and working environments.

Using incentives strategically

Stakeholders highlighted the importance of making incentives specific to the course and target group. For instance, in-house stakeholders who delivered NumberFit courses with gyms said that it worked well if learners were given something when they signed up, such as a free water bottle or fitness tracker, as well as something if they completed the course, such as a free membership for a month. A provider stakeholder gave the example of the way they incentivised highway staff to attend sessions was by offering Gregg's sausage rolls and bacon sandwiches at sessions.

Community outreach and building relationships

Delivery stakeholders involved in outreach often emphasised the importance of building relationships with people in the community by getting to know them, rather than taking a 'sales pitch' approach to promoting Multiply. While this was considered resource-intensive initially, the pay-off was the word-of-mouth referrals that came through as a result. The referral model was developed with National Numeracy in partnership with local job centres and schools also succeeded due to its focus on outreach.

Personalising communications and marketing material

One LA stakeholder involved in Multiply's communications content fed back that social media content that contained real-life videos or photo with testimonials from learners received more engagement than stock imagery. Through the attendance of engagement events, LA stakeholders were able to understand the target market better, which tended to be those unemployed and women aged between 30-45. This also helped them to connect with learners and gather marketing content that would resonate with these groups. They also filmed staff talking about the course content in order to market Multiply in more personable ways.

Having an induction week at the start of courses to onboard new learners

To address the challenge of completing paperwork with learners, the Council came up with the solution of tagging an extra week onto the start of their 6-week bootcamps. This meant they pitched the courses as 7 weeks and used the 'Week 0' as an induction week to introduce the tutor, assess learner needs and complete initial assessments and paperwork.

Incorporating learner feedback

Stakeholders often fed back the value of regularly collecting learner feedback. For instance, one sub-contractor decided to cut the course down to 3 days instead of 4 to increase engagement in Year 2 and run more efficiently. They also stopped using the word maths to advertise as learners felt this was off-putting language.

Running courses in familiar environments or with engaging and fun topics

In one example given by an employer stakeholder, learners felt able to engage with Multiply better because it was within the context of their everyday work environment. This worked well because it felt less like school and therefore less intimidating or daunting. More broadly, numeracy embedded into tangible skills and interests did well. Examples of this included farming, shopping or budgeting, exercise, and relevant work-based skills that involved measurements or calculations.

“It was in their everyday environment with people that they spend all day, every day with. But if I said right, you're going back to school or you're going to college. It would have probably terrified them and they wouldn't have done it. It's a very different culture.” - *Employer*

6.5.6. Barriers

Some of the key challenges delivery teams faced were funding delays, staffing and recruitment and employer engagement. Some stakeholders also fed back challenges around monitoring and reporting. However, these issues seemed to have been mostly resolved by Year 3.

Funding delays

The management of funding was a key source of frustration. An LA stakeholder expressed disappointment that despite funding arriving late in Year 1, they were not able to carry this over into Year 2, and outlined that a 5-year programme would give teams enough lead time to set-up their processes, so that latter years could focus on delivery and having a wider impact.

“If we could carry [funding]over, there's so many more people we could support, now it's up and running.” - *Employer*

Employer buy-in and employee time

As discussed in relation to set-up, a key challenge at the start of Year 2 was establishing employer buy-in and securing staff time off to attend Multiply classes. This created barriers to delivery in some employer partnerships. For instance, one sub-contractor gave the example of NHS workers having been harder to engage due to employers not giving staff time off and sessions being cancelled.

Finding and resourcing good tutors

Those in charge of delivering Multiply felt that finding good tutors was a challenge. An example was given of a teacher who was hired in Year 1 who they had to let go of in Year 2 because they were not willing to work collaboratively on learner engagement alongside teaching responsibilities. Heading into Year 3, the team were satisfied with the tutors they had hired. However, they described teaching staff as being at capacity due to the popularity of courses. They did not have the funds to hire more staff.

The use of internal resource for tracking and monitoring

Stakeholders involved in tracking and monitoring described initially that they struggled with their Learner Management System as up-to-date learner files were hard to maintain. A few also described a resource-intensive process where staff had phoned around learners to collect feedback and make sure records were correct. This had been time-consuming and only achieved a 60% response rate in Year 2. To make efficiencies, they have started operationalising learner feedback collection through surveys and delegating more feedback collection to teachers and partners.

6.5.7. Opportunities for innovation

Stakeholders gave multiple examples of innovation. The entirety of the in-house delivery team's approach to engagement and programme delivery could be described as innovative as having to set up from scratch enabled them to trial new ideas and partnerships. Sub-contractors similarly designed new curriculum ideas. Those involved in the set-up of Gloucestershire's Local Champions Network also felt this was a good example of innovative partnership working.

Bootcamp-style short courses to induct new learners gradually

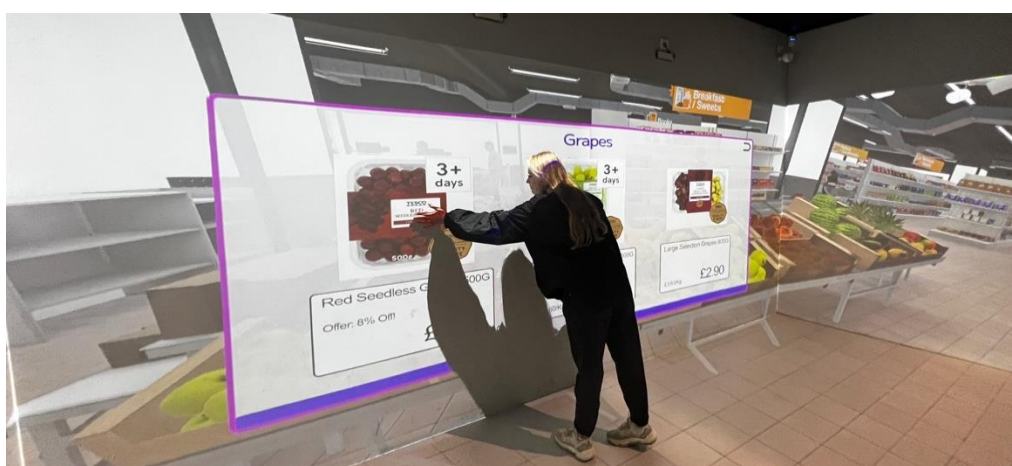
Each bootcamp had a theme. For instance, 'Figure out Farming' involved teaching numeracy while learning how to raise calves, whereas NumberFit was run at leisure centres and used exercise to engage learners. With different hooks such as health and wellbeing, the Council had more options to cater to different interests. Stakeholders felt the flexible bootcamp model was effective as it helped staff get to know learners and built learner's confidence in using maths and attending lessons before moving them onto other courses such as the preparatory course for functional skills.

"We'll be running NumberFit and Wealth for Health simultaneously in the same day with the same venue and cohort, building confidence and awareness. We know their interest in health, fitness and well-being because they've come to one and just sort of rotate it round. That model has worked really well" - *LA delivery team*

‘Shop and Save’; an immersive event at a local library aimed at engaging families

Programme leaders for Multiply partnered with a local library to host an immersive event aimed at families. Shop and Save invited families to interact with a large touchscreen wall to compare the price of different food items and calculate shopping costs within a budget (see Figure 10 below). Stakeholders felt this was one of the most innovative ways the Council came up with to identify and signpost young families who could benefit from Multiply and other Adult Learning provisions.

Figure 10: The Council’s “Shop and Save” green screen event at a local library



Harnessing the creative talents of maths tutors to run innovative course ideas

Multiply funding gave tutors more freedom with how they delivered learning. A key example of this was given by a provider stakeholder that worked at a local arts charity. A maths tutor who was also interested in singing drew on this passion to design a 10-week bespoke programme for a group of adults with learning disabilities. They began by using singing scales to teach maths numeracy. Members’ engagement with singing also led to the formation of a choir and the curriculum evolved to encompass project management skills that helped them design and plan a public performance.

"They learned carols, designed the posters, planned all the time scales, rehearsals schedules.... so it wasn't just about the numeracy involved in singing the song. It was absolutely unbelievable, the progression that they made, the confidence that they built." - *Provider*

Setting up a Local Champions Network specific to Gloucestershire

The Council used part of its funding to enlist National Numeracy to train members of their team as local numeracy champions. Local champions were also recruited in schools and job centres in hard-to-reach areas. In addition, Gloucestershire Council spearheaded the creation of a Local Champions Network to bring champions together to share ideas. This idea was proposed by one of the programme coordinators who felt that the existing National Champions Network could be made even more localised.

6.5.8. Value for money perspective

Overall, LA stakeholders agreed that Multiply's budget was used effectively to run high quality programmes. Those involved in monitoring referenced the quality and performance targets being met. Programme leads indicated that classes were at capacity and that the demand they were seeing warranted more budget to fund more staff and courses. Stakeholders also referred to the impact on learners described in terms of their confidence levels and quality of life.

"The quality of the courses are to a very high standard. Learner engagement is high. Targets are being met, so we've not got empty courses, they're full. We meet our targets by the end of the year." - *Provider*

6.6. Satisfaction with Multiply

6.6.1. Overall satisfaction

Overall, stakeholders felt their expectations were met in terms of what they wanted out of Multiply. Across the board, they described being very satisfied with the outcomes of Year 2 and 3 to date. The main reason given was the sense of reward having seen the impact Multiply has had for learners who had previously not engaged with adult learning. However, the consensus is also that there was more that could be done, such as building out their employer offer and scaling up successful initiatives. They concluded that while the programme has been a success, it is a shame it is ending so soon.

"It's such a shame that it's coming to an end because we really feel that it's impacted so many people's lives. It could have made a massive difference if we could have carried on a bit longer." - *LA strategic stakeholder*

"It's just such a tragedy that it's going to stop, and if they can find a way to continue this, I think it's really important." - *Provider*

Positive feedback from learners was reported anecdotally by delivery teams. The Council also shared several testimonials (see Figure 11) that were written up or recorded with learners' consent. Examples of positive feedback were:¹⁹

- Looked forward to courses each week
- Felt mentally stimulated and challenged
- Wished they had started sooner
- Felt more confident
- Saved more money
- Improved their health
- Learnt new skills such as fractions and percentages.

Figure 11: Learners providing positive feedback



Feedback from employers and delivery teams that worked on employer partnerships was more mixed. The consensus was that while the set-up for learner provision can be

¹⁹ More detailed examples are included in the section Outcomes and Impact below.

challenging, it could have a huge impact when done well. The Multiply partnership with Ringway was frequently mentioned as an example of this, with stakeholders on both sides in agreement that it has been a positive working relationship. An employer stakeholder explained that they have been impressed with the Council's Multiply leads due to their flexibility and adaptability in designing an approach tailored to their employees' needs.

6.6.2. Satisfaction with delivery and contents

Across the board, stakeholders described being satisfied with all aspects of the programme. There was minimal distinction across the different elements. Some specific points of feedback were provided on:

- **Communications and outreach:** LA delivery stakeholders were satisfied with their campaign. However, they also felt that a more coordinated approach across local areas could have helped them to get up and running quicker. Specifically, a stakeholder involved in marketing Multiply would have liked to be able to share and access more resources and templates from other local areas who had already started promotions in Year 1.
- **Engagement and progression:** Some LA stakeholders commented on how the bootcamp approach was a successful way to keep learners engaged while also progressed them towards a functional skills qualification. Delivery teams did not raise any issues with learner feedback surveys and generally felt these were successful at documenting progression.
- **Course location and timings:** Employer stakeholders and delivery stakeholders were particularly positive about the Council's flexibility in where and when courses were delivered. Some of the important considerations highlighted were around employees' peak hours; or parents' school pick up times. They were also impressed with the ability to bring courses to the spaces themselves e.g. gyms, schools and employer depots.
- **Teaching, learning materials and contents:** Positive feedback was given across the board regarding the quality of teaching. Delivery partners employed their own tutors and described successful quality assurance processes to keep this of a high standard, such as regular meetings with programme leads to implement learner feedback.

"What's been consistent is the positive feedback on how the tutors have delivered it, but also how far [learners] have travelled in their courses." - *Provider*

6.7. Outcomes and impact

Overall, stakeholders reported that Multiply was successful in its core objectives of improved confidence in numeracy among those not eligible for support under AEB. The programme has also enabled the Council to expand its services to reach more rural areas of Gloucestershire by its work with local providers and charitable partners to set up new referral pathways into Adult Education.

6.7.1. Delivery outcomes

Some outcomes were reported by stakeholders in relation to delivery targets. Others highlighted new provisions and pathways set up to reach new learners. Key successes that were highlighted by providers and employer stakeholders were:

- **The establishment of a successful employment partnership with Ringway** was considered a notable success by stakeholders. Programmes were rolled out to all Ringway depots following a successful pilot. Multiply training has been made mandatory across the workforce and has been nominated for three awards (see Figure 12 below). An employer stakeholder also noted that the partnership has spearheaded more pathways and collaborations with other Council departments. For instance, Ringway are now working closely with DWP to improve their Adult Learning offer.
- **Charity sub-contractor ArtSpace has grown its provision** and delivered arts and maths courses to 670 learners in Year 2, up from 60 in Year 1.
- **Sub-contractor PTS has exceeded its Year 2 targets**, which has enabled them to renew their contract for unemployed learners which they have already hit the Year 3 target for. Additionally, they saw numeracy confidence scores among learners increase from 3 or 4 to 7 over the course.

Figure 12: Workforce initiative award nominations



In addition, LA stakeholders and delivery partners cited new pathways to in-house provision and learning networks as key outcomes. In particular, they:

- **trained 101 Local Numeracy Champions** who can signpost to Multiply and Adult learning services, putting them close to hitting their 150 Champions by Year 3 target
- **ran a pilot in the rural area of Forest of Dean** to train work coaches in job centres in Cinderford and Coleford in signposting job seekers to Multiply to improve their numeracy skills
- **created a bespoke families referral pathway by training Teaching Assistants**, which connected with local schools in hard-to-reach areas to train eleven TAs to improve and add confidence to their numeracy skills and signpost families to further support
- **created a Local Champions Network** for those advocating for maths in the community to come together and share/discuss ideas
- **hosted a National Numeracy Day** that brought champions and local providers together and offered awards

"[Work coaches] love the training and Gloucestershire are supporting them with other provision now too. They feel more able to recognise when maths anxiety might be a barrier to someone finding work." - *Provider*

"[Teaching Assistants] weren't in the position within the schools where they could go back and say, right, we need to do this, because they are support staff... so we did this half hour session where we focused a lot on their confidence and how they can improve their skills, and how they could talk more confidently to others" - *Provider*

6.7.2. Impact on learners

Overall outcomes

The impact on learners has been gathered anecdotally based on learner feedback the Council received. At the time of the interviews, the Council was in the process of writing up case studies and synthesising feedback. Examples reported by stakeholders included the following outcomes:

- **More confidence** in the use of numbers in everyday life situations (e.g. shopping, managing bills).
- **Improved quality of life** e.g. improved health and wellbeing, social skills and decreased social isolation, saved money on weekly shopping and better budgeting skills.
- **Progression at work** by the development of new skills to pursue promotions and job opportunities, after previously facing barriers such as exam failure or lack of confidence.
- **Participation in new experiences** e.g. employment or volunteering, arts and creativity.
- **A shift in mindset** with learners who left school as they realised it's never too late to invest in their education and skills.
- **Parents investment in their own education** and their ability to help children with homework.
- **Learners supported one another by** working on exercises together and built a sense of camaraderie which further supported in driving their engagement and growing their numeracy skills.

"We've got a lot of case studies that we're working up at the moment of people that have literally said to us it's changed their lives. It's given them confidence to actually go for promotions. It's given them confidence to go for their formal qualifications." - *LA strategic lead*

"We've had parents sitting there in floods of tears going, 'This is the first time that I've been able to do something for me rather than just for my child.'" - *LA strategic lead*

Impact on health and lifestyle outcomes

Across several interviews, LA stakeholders highlighted the long-term impact Multiply had on a learners' quality of life and confidence. One stand-out example often mentioned was of a lady who was previously agoraphobic but who now volunteers at a local shop.

"We have one lady who hadn't left her house for 18 months before she did the [NumberFit] course... her health assistant persuaded her to do it. She's got a brain disorder and she was quite agoraphobic, she nearly left within 20 minutes... I shadowed her and helped her along [with] some of the courses. She is volunteering in a local shop now. She absolutely loves it. She said if she hadn't done it, she would have just still been sat at home." - *LA strategic lead*

"There was one lady who hadn't left the house for a very long time, and it's given her a lot of confidence. There was another lady who had a lot of anxiety and has quite a severe stutter and it's helped her grow her confidence as well." - *LA Delivery team*

Another success story highlighted was of an ex-smoker who quit after completing several bootcamp courses with the Council. On Wealth for Health, she used the app to log how much money she was spending. This helped her work out how much she would save if she quit smoking. The app calculated the amount she would by the end of the year if she quit smoking. She also participated in NumberFit which helped her to increase her mobility and health.

"She said, this has potentially saved my life because I'm not smoking anymore. She took her grandkids to the park and she didn't take her walker and she didn't get out of breath because she'd been doing the NumberFit course with us." - *LA strategic lead*

6.7.3. Impact on Adult Learning services

Council stakeholders suggested several examples of how the legacy of Multiply will continue to impact their Adult Learning services going forward:

- **New internal processes:** Through the recruitment of delivery stakeholders in charge of programme management, the Council now have a process flow and several templates for in-house engagement activities and bootcamp-style courses to target new learners.
- **Improved Council reputation:** Stakeholders who coordinated events like the immersive Shop and Save green screen activity felt this has helped to modernise the Council's image.

- **Better community links:** The recruitment of learning coordinators, whose role is to develop community links, has led to strong partnerships with local foodbanks, schools, leisure centres, libraries, shopping centres and job centres.
- **Better understanding of 'hard to reach' learners:** Stakeholders in the LA felt as if by Year 3 they had a stronger understanding of the types of groups they had previously been missing with their services and how to develop and market courses better.
- **Strengthened buy-in from councillors:** Councillors attendance at Multiply events, such as the Maths choir performance and NumberFit course, gave them an insight into the impact the programme was able to have and encouraged them to promote it wider.
- **Inspired other local areas to set up local Champion networks:** Taking Gloucestershire's lead, other local areas were inspired to create their own local networks for numeracy Champions in the community.
- **Better collaboration between departments:** LA stakeholders felt that having a dedicated communications expert from within the Council was invaluable and has led to more collaborative working across Departments.

"Wiltshire loved the [Local Champions Network] idea... and now we've just started one in Yorkshire bringing all the Yorkshire champions back so it's had an impact across Multiply as a whole." - *Provider*

6.8. Future plans

Going forward, the Council stakeholders involved in strategy and planning wanted to **embed tutors into the delivery of non-Multiply services**. They also shared that they were planning to adapt bootcamp courses to **run within AEB** and plan to continue tailored learning through **a community grant**.

The **Local Champions Network was seen as a key legacy activity**. The Council reported that they will continue to host monthly forums for trained numeracy champions in Gloucestershire to come together and discuss ways to promote maths in the community, grow their network and recruit more volunteers. While there are some questions about how to maintain momentum with the lack of resource, the team felt that having such a network offered opportunities for the future.

“As part of our legacy, we have forums once a month for numeracy champions to come together get out in the community, encouraging people to not be scared of maths.” - *LA strategic lead*

"The idea is really wherever possible to keep that network of champions going. So that you've got that legacy beyond Multiply and they're all connecting and supporting each other. So that is a real positive out of the project." - *Provider*

Another legacy activity is the **Shop and Save** digital screen, which the Council reported will continue to be hosted and managed by a local library.

7. Liverpool City Region Combined Authority case study

7.1. Case study context

Fieldwork for the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority case study was completed between the 23rd of October and the 17th of November 2024, during Year 3 of Multiply delivery. A total of eight interviews were conducted with stakeholders from the MCA.

Liverpool is an urban, Mayoral Combined Authority in the North West. It had a medium-sized budget of £8,375,194 during the three years of the Multiply programme. It was selected as a case study due to it exceeding its delivery targets, success engaging and sub-contracting to VSCOs (Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations), and offer of continued professional development for its staff during the programme.

7.2. Topline summary

Innovation

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority set out an innovative delivery model for Multiply which involved working with grant-funded providers and sub-contracting to VSCOs in each of its six boroughs. This aligned with the region's wider objective to engage people in numeracy who would not typically enter formal education.

Impact and value for money

Multiply is considered an impactful initiative and good value for money. **Stakeholders noted that Liverpool City Region had exceeded its targets and inspired other areas to follow a similar delivery model.** Outcomes highlighted included progression into further education, better employment opportunities, reduced social isolation and better maths literacy for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners. It has also helped providers to roll out more family learning programmes to reach parents in schools.

Set-up

Initial challenges in the set-up of Multiply related to differentiating it from Adult Education Budget (AEB) funding and getting providers on board. However, once proposals had been agreed, stakeholders felt that using grant-funded providers helped to expedite delivery in Year 1. This meant that Years 2 and 3 focused on testing and refining partnerships and processes.

Community focus

The use of Workers' Educational Association (WEA) community grants was considered key to Liverpool City Region's success. VCSOs not needing to be registered with Ofsted enabled councils to create more pathways into communities without local partners having the pressure of inspections. A key outcome of this was the increased range of specialist partners and niche groups that providers could reach. This is anticipated to have a long-term impact on the delivery of adult education, as it would bring more providers on board with the sub-contracting model.

Stakeholders in Local Areas and Colleges also highlighted the value of sending teaching staff into the community. Tutors delivered non-accredited courses in locations such as women's shelters, housing groups and charity venues. This has helped to break down barriers among groups such as those who are homeless, on probation or vulnerable. It has also freed up classroom space in Colleges.

This model also allowed Colleges to offer better wraparound support. Stakeholders used Multiply funding to offer more tailored learning, additional classes and learning resources for students and teaching staff. Bespoke classes for ESOL learners to improve their understanding of maths terminology were amongst the most successful examples in terms of progression into formal qualifications.

Legacy

Colleges also reported continuing professional development (CPD) for their staff as a key highlight and long-term legacy of Multiply. It has helped tutors to adopt a wider variety of strategies and started to shift the hierarchy between staff and students. Staff training is an area that some Colleges say they would invest more into if Multiply were to run again, particularly training more non-maths teachers.

Challenges

The main challenges related to reporting. Stakeholders felt reporting processes could have been more efficiently designed. The central team expanded their administrative function centrally to account for the additional work and local areas and Colleges had put more staff time towards helping learners to complete paperwork and maintaining quality assurance across a widening number of partners.

Another challenge highlighted by delivery teams was the management of marketing and footfall in community-based classes. As engagement was often managed by VCSOs, providers were not always aware of how many learners would turn up to a class and they occasionally struggled to secure sufficient numbers in community-based classes. This forced providers to run extra sessions in schools and community venues to meet targets.

Stakeholders also felt that the ‘soft outcomes’ such as reduced social isolation, health and wellbeing benefits and cooking skills were harder to capture as part of Multiply.

7.3. Strategic overview

7.3.1. Background to local area

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority includes six councils in North West England with a combined population of 1.6 million. Established in 2014, the authority has devolved oversight of funding for adult skills education. The large and diverse city has a growing economy, but some areas still experience significant deprivation and skills shortages. The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority brings together six local councils: Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool City Council, Sefton, St Helens, and Wirral (see Figure 13).²⁰

Figure 13: Liverpool City Region's six councils



Delivery stakeholders operating across Liverpool City Region reported the lack of Level 2 qualifications as a regional issue. Meanwhile, local delivery teams were aware of specific issues in their borough. For instance, Knowsley and the Wirral were both described as areas with high levels of social isolation.

“The authority we’re in [...] is the most deprived in the country. Not all are economically deprived, but mainly, it's around social isolation and mental health.” - *LA delivery team*

“The Wirral's quite unique. It's a peninsula. The “Insular Peninsula”, if you like. It's quite an insular area.” - *College stakeholder*

²⁰ Interviews were conducted with strategic stakeholders from Liverpool City Region and delivery stakeholders at Colleges and LAs to gain representation across the Combined Authority.

7.3.2. Multiply alignment with wider strategic objectives

Strategic stakeholders designed their investment plan for Multiply in line with their strategic objectives.²¹ They described it needing to take a novel and innovative approach to reaching people who would not ordinarily set foot in a college. It aimed to **support existing programmes under AEB, such as Test and Learn**, which trialled new approaches to engaging learners and see what worked best.

“It comes down to capturing latent demand in the system from learners who wouldn’t ordinarily step through the doors of a college... and also how we can deliver to those who may need more intensive support that wouldn’t be able to benefit from mainstream learning. That sculpted our investment plan, and also the types of things we were looking to fund from providers.” – *Liverpool City Region MSA stakeholder*

Some stakeholders also highlighted how Multiply fitted into wider regional plans, such as through:

- The goal of Local Authorities in the Liverpool City Region to **reintegrate family learning** into their funded provisions.
- The broader mandate of Colleges to **address inequalities and reduce the adult skills gap**.

7.3.3. Stakeholder feedback on design

When reflecting on delivery, stakeholders touched upon some of the challenges in the setup of funding allocations and investment plans in Year 1. They mentioned:

- **Geographic allocations:** Challenges in the allocation of funding fairly across the Local Authority patches.
- **Distinction from AEB:** Providers had some initial concerns about the funding due to potential overlaps with statutory entitlements (e.g. Skills for Life). Some needed to take more time to differentiate their investment plans.

²¹ Each LA completed an investment plan for Multiply. This set out funding allocations for each year and key targets including the number of initiatives rolled out and number of enrolments under each of the 10 intervention types.

“We made it substantially different in order to make it work and [be] attractive to colleges and LA community learning providers.” –
Liverpool City Region MSA stakeholder

Several stakeholders also pointed out that there was a **misalignment between the funding schedule and the academic term time**. This put pressure on delivery teams to adjust their resourcing plans mid-year. For instance, one College described how they struggled to fill a tutor vacancy in the first term of their new academic year because Year 3 funding had not been released yet.

7.4. Programme set-up

7.4.1. Collaborations and partnerships

Liverpool City Region’s approach to partnerships in Year 2 was generally a continuation of Year 1, with some refinements to how they allocated grant spending.

Continuing to work with grant-funded providers

Liverpool City Region maintained the partnership working model that had been set up in Year 1 to expedite delivery. This involved grant funding **Colleges** and **Local Authorities** that were already on a pre-approved list. This also enabled them to work with existing local networks and delivery partners such as **WEA Community Grants** (to fund VCISO initiatives) and Trade Union Congress (TUC) Union Learn (to reach employers).

“Fortunately, by going with just our grant-funded providers and allowing them to subcontract to VCSOs, it meant we could hit the ground running. It had the benefit of us not having to go through a complicated procurement process.” – *Liverpool City Region MSA stakeholder*

Delivery partner selection

After sub-contracting to National Numeracy in Year 1, the decision was made to pivot away from this resource in Years 2 and 3. Strategic stakeholders fed back that the charity’s focus on online resources was not aligned with the key issues **of deprivation and digital inequalities** in the region. In Year 2, the budget was reallocated from National Numeracy to VCSOs via community grants. Strategic stakeholders felt that this better aligned with their vision and plans to offer localised and tailored support to engage hard-to-reach learners.

During the initial selection process of providers, the central team described needing to balance factors such as who was ready to deliver and which proposals had the lowest degree of overlap with AEB. This helped to keep them aligned to their investment plan.

Delivery stakeholders also described a clear selection process, which involved going out to partners and allowing them to submit an expression of interest. These were then assessed by an internal panel within the College or LA.

This process was considered a success in terms of its assessment of which existing partners were most suited to delivering Multiply. It also helped connect local areas with new community groups who could create inroads to learners they had not yet engaged with. For instance, one LA set up pilots in Year 1 to test what was or was not working with established partners. In Year 2, they reallocated smaller budgets to a wider variety of partners to establish new links. By Year 3, they had established which partnerships were the most effective in terms of delivering against targets and in quality of outcomes.

7.4.2. Employer engagement

Liverpool City Region also engaged with the TUC to reach employers. Specifically, stakeholders described the value of using the TUC Union Learn network to access new partnerships.²²

7.4.3. Target audience selection

Stakeholders described the primary focus for Multiply as being to target hard to reach groups of learners who were falling through the gaps of traditional adult skills services. To keep this distinct from AEB, they selected community providers who had built up trusted relationships with these types of learners and had a specialist understanding of their needs and circumstances.

Some of the groups Multiply aimed to target were described as:

- Deprived communities
- Ethnic minorities and ESOL learners
- Parents of primary school children
- SEND learners
- Faith groups
- Homeless or struggling with housing

²² Employer engagement was mentioned by case study leads and not in any delivery interviews, suggesting Liverpool City Region managed this partnership.

- Vulnerable women and abuse survivors
- Those on probation
- Care leavers and school leavers.

Providers specified further criteria in their outreach and communications, for instance not having a maths GCSE and having children of a certain age (when they were targeting parents in schools).

“When we sent out communications for the course, it was very explicit who the target audience was. So the age of the child was a pre-requirement, and not having a (maths) GCSE.” - *LA delivery team*

Some Colleges also used a skills tracker to check if students with Level 2 qualifications were performing at that level, and if they could benefit from more wraparound support via Multiply provisions.

7.4.4. Facilitators to programme set-up

Having existing infrastructure centrally

The existence of a central infrastructure within Liverpool City Region helped stakeholders to set up processes for Year 2. Strategic stakeholders described how having a dedicated administrative team that dealt with finances, quality assurance, performance and monitoring and legal matters was an ‘asset’. An example given was having been able to assist with finding back-end solutions for data and reporting queries. This helped them to avoid passing this burden onto delivery partners.

Enlisting a subcontractor model which made the most of their strengths

The use of grant-funded providers allowed Liverpool City Region to get started quickly with delivery in Year 1 and hit its targets quicker than other regions. This was recognised as a strength for the set-up of initiatives which could engage with a variety of community-based groups more freely and flexibly.

“We realised what our limitations were with the programme and chose the most expedient route and then enabled those providers to have the flexibility to subcontract in order to get a wider engagement of learners where we needed to.” - *LA strategic stakeholder*

7.4.5. Barriers to programme set-up

The additional administrative resource required centrally

Despite the benefits of having a central function, strategic stakeholders noted that there was still not enough administrative resource to manage Multiply operationally. They had to hire new staff to cope with the workload, which went beyond the additional 10% anticipated. This included:

- An administrative programme support officer.
- An additional staff member to support with compliance functions.
- Additional resource for programme managers who oversaw contracts.
- Additional funding of their finance team's time to deal with the complexity of Multiply payments.
- Support from their legal team to manage new contracts.

Engaging providers

Some providers were similarly put off by the additional resource required to run Multiply and potential overlaps with AEB. Commissioners described having to work extra hard to differentiate Multiply from other mainstream funding pots to make the proposal attractive to providers. Even then, some providers found it took substantial resources to incorporate Multiply into their existing provisions.

A stakeholder described how one College was not prepared for the administrative burden it created in Year 1 and dropped out for Year 2. They rejoined in Year 3 after having clarified their goals and vision for Multiply.

Several others highlighted that Multiply funding ran on a different schedule to other provisions and to the academic year, which created additional work at the start of each year to ensure Multiply stayed within the terms of its Grant Agreement.

7.5. Programme delivery

7.5.1. Delivery model

In Liverpool City Region, Multiply was delivered entirely by grant-funded providers. Strategic stakeholders who sat in Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's central function oversaw operations and governance processes. They tended to be more distant from delivery and described their role as more of a commissioner than a provider.

Local delivery was mostly operated via the six Local Authorities (Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St, Helens, and Wirral) and local Colleges (of which five were

interviewed). Each had their own delivery function, as well as a community-based provision which included local outreach activities and sub-contracting to VCSOs.

Multiply was embedded using a range of approaches as captured below:

- **Building more numeracy skills into existing courses:** Running maths-focused sessions or incorporated more maths learning into accredited courses. For instance, sessions on 'Maths in Psychology', and incorporated numeracy into agriculture and farming courses.
- **Delivering teaching in the community:** Worked with community partners to deliver non-accredited 'Maths by Stealth' activities in local venues. This included a variety of topics and activities, from shopping on a budget, to cooking and growing courses.
- **Bespoke courses to attract new learners:** Entry-level courses which aimed to boost confidence and served as a stepping stone to accredited learning. Examples of this included 'MATHSOL' classes for ESOL learners that tackled maths literacy.
- **More wraparound support for individuals:** Expanded on existing Adult Skills provisions to offer a more supportive learning environment. This included pastoral care, tailored and one-to-one learning which adapted teaching to meet the pace and needs of the learner.
- **Supported family learning provisions:** Delivered engagement activities in schools to parents and teaching assistants to boost confidence teaching Key Stage 2 maths.
- **Staff CPD:** Upskilled staff by offering CPD modules or putting on extra training courses.

Colleges and local areas often took a mixture of approaches, in which they used funds to expand community partnerships and enhanced existing provisions and wraparound support.

For instance, a significant portion of St Helens College's funding went to a range of their community partners, as they only had two to three tutors delivering Multiply. They then used the remaining funds to bolster their internal provisions and CPD for staff. Knowsley Council split their funds across VSCO contracts and family learning, with local partners granted access to their big bank of teaching staff.

7.5.2. Programme management

Central management

Multiply is managed centrally by an Adult Education Programme Manager who looks after all funding pots for Adult Skills, and a Systems Programme Manager who has a more operational role in overseeing performance and monitoring procedures for providers and supporting with delivery.

Strategic stakeholders described a robust governance process for Multiply which followed the same steps as AEB. For instance, their **Programme Board** was required to sign off all awards and programmes run by Multiply. Providers were required to set out enrolments and learner volume outputs according to a delivery plan. This was signed off by commissioners who consider value for money and curriculum spread. Proposals were developed into individual performance logs that commissioners used to monitor providers throughout the year.

Strategic stakeholders described a dedicated **performance management function** for Multiply which kept a tight oversight of providers' performance to ensure a clear audit trail.

Key activities mentioned were:

- Quarterly reporting
- Ensuring data accuracy
- Performance reviews and ensuring providers are hitting their planned delivery targets
- Mid-year reviews to check in with provider progress
- Mid-year commissioner panel review, where strategic stakeholders look at the financials and reshuffle money within the system to meet investment targets
- Reporting back to DfE.

The central function also played a role in **championing Multiply within the provider base** and gathering case studies and evidence to facilitate the sharing of best practice across the provider network.

“As part of our responsibility of reporting back and providing case studies, it's also championing the programme and ensuring that we capture good practice and share that across the provider base.” - *LA strategic stakeholder*

Providers

All College and LA stakeholders implemented quality assurance procedures in line with RARPA standards (Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement). One College also mentioned using the **National Training Foundation** for College certificates. These are considered effective ways to maintain quality standards given the large volume of subcontractors.

In-person audits were particularly helpful for quality assurance. Stakeholders found that classroom visits offered a first-hand view of the impact of Multiply on confidence levels, as well as allowing local areas to perform quality checks of outcomes reported.

“Although they [community partner] achieved targets, some of the quality aspects were queried through some of our observations” - *LA delivery team*

Quality procedures helped to ensure spending occurred within the Grant Agreement. In addition, some stakeholders noted that having **clear delivery plans** helped to manage funds and avoided duplication with other provision. One LA stakeholder described having had a limit per learner to help balance the freedom to innovate with the need to control costs.

“We set a limit of £250 per learner. The money is enough to enable [partners] to be creative to meet the costs, but also to have some kind of incentives for the clients that they're working with, whether it be buying ingredients for healthy eating or funding free physical health activities.” - *LA delivery team*

7.5.3. Communications and outreach

Marketing strategies for Multiply differed depending on the College or Local Authority. There was no coordinated communications approach for Liverpool City Region.

Colleges

College stakeholders generally did not promote Multiply as a standalone course but as part of their wider package of provision, which included the logo and branding. They felt this helped to differentiate Multiply provision, while also not pushing the maths messaging too hard for learners who might be put off by this. Examples of communication included advertising Multiply provision within their online prospectus and sending emails to staff to encourage them to self-nominate for CPD.

Some colleges used Multiply funding to host public stalls and recruitment drives to attract learners who could benefit from numeracy support - but otherwise had not considered adult learning. In one example, a college had set up a market stall to offer practical support with tasks such as translating a receipt or breaking down shopping costs, in which this led to enrolment and participation in Multiply in Year 2 among ESOL learners. In Years 2 and 3, they had put Multiply on their digital prospectus, which led to further enrolments for Multiply specifically.

“We had two students who progressed on to maths courses [after Multiply]. They're brilliant and they weren't enrolled before that. [They came] directly through the market stand. All the students I've got this year have come to enrol on Multiply directly from the prospectus.” -
College stakeholder

No Colleges mentioned social media advertising. However, one stakeholder did mention struggling to engage new learners online and needing to find a better platform to liaise with community organisations (BlueSky and X were seen as potential options for this).

Local areas

Local areas stakeholders have marketed Multiply to learners **directly in schools through their family learning function**. Often, this involved using existing school links and setting up in-person engagement activities. Other approaches have also included fliers, posts on social media and school apps and enlisting teachers to help recruit eligible parents. While they have struggled with individual walk-ins, engagement sessions have been particularly effective as they have helped establish a rapport between delivery teams in councils and learners.

VCSOs

When it came to working with sub-contractors, local areas and Colleges tended to let community partners mostly manage their own outreach and offered support mostly in the form of paperwork and branding.

“We don't specify to them what ways they should engage. They know their clients best, which is why we're doing the community approach... Everything we do has to have the City Region and Multiply logo. So we provide all that paperwork to them and we provide the icons.” - *LA delivery team*

Internal communications

The other main engagement activity for Local Authorities was partner communications. Grant funding opportunities were advertised to VCOSs through the LA's internal system, on their Facebook page, website and through other community group networks.

For instance, one LA had set up a WhatsApp community that facilitated quicker information sharing between partners and local stakeholders. This was viewed as more effective than emailing, as it allowed partners to quickly share resources without needing to meet up in person.

“E-mail is now one of the slower responses for us... WhatsApp was an effective tool to generate questions with partners... [they can] interact, share ideas, provisions [and] update each other quite quickly... it's a community of practice model where they don't have to wait until the next meeting in-person to network.” - *LA delivery team*

7.5.4. Tracking learner engagement

While providers described slightly different processes depending on the audience, learners generally completed an assessment form on enrolling. Some Colleges also offered more in-depth conversations for enrolled students which had helped to capture a more thorough understanding of learner needs.

In terms of software for tracking and monitoring, several approaches were mentioned:

- **Promonitor** for note-taking and logging the learner journey.
- **Skills forward** for the initial assessment.
- **Markbooks** for logging student progress.
- **Colour coding** students as red, amber or green in terms of their readiness to progress.
- **Self-assessment surveys** to capture confidence using numeracy and social value of Multiply (e.g. social isolation, wellbeing, employment opportunities and volunteering engagements).
- **QR codes** to direct students to self-assessment surveys.
- **Mindfulness journalling** to encourage more relaxed sharing opportunities, which work particularly well for learners who struggle to or are put off by filling in forms.
- **Case studies** to evidence impact among learners who have participated in Multiply.

Learner records are tracked and reported using **Management Information System (MIS) and Individualised Learner Record (ILR) systems**. These were effective in tracking progression. For instance, an LA stakeholder pointed out that management information systems linked up with Functional Skills records. However, these systems ran into an academic year, which could have made the reporting process more time-consuming. A College stakeholder mentioned that they had to spend more time uploading claims as Multiply reporting had to be done separately to other provision.

7.5.5. Facilitators to delivery

Stakeholders felt delivery was successful due to being able to offer more practical, community-based learning and non-accredited courses in relaxed environments. The addition of teacher training and being able to draw on existing Test and Learn and Family Learning infrastructure were also highlighted as key facilitators to delivery.

Community-based learning and the use of WEA grants

The ability to subcontract VCSOs via WEA community grants²³ helped to deliver more teaching in community locations. Stakeholders felt this was beneficial for several reasons:

- **Expanded classroom capacity:** Colleges that did not have the classroom capacity could have hosted activities in community venues. This also helped learners to engage better as the environment was more familiar to them and less school-like.
- **VCSOs not needing to be registered with Ofsted:** Stakeholders found it easier to engage VCSOs as partners without the pressure of needing to adhere to Ofsted regulations.
- **More localised targeting:** Community partners had built up a repertoire of skills and expertise working with individuals in deprived parts of Liverpool and so were able to engage with them more effectively.
- **Reduced the size of grants to work with more partners:** Some stakeholders opted for this approach to increase the range of partners and communities they could reach.

“[Removing Ofsted] allowed us to speak to individuals without providers worrying about being subject to state inspections. So it was a lot more of a relaxed conversation in terms of delivering Maths by stealth and applying it to everyday working life.” - *LA strategic stakeholder*

²³ WEA community grants were provided across the Liverpool City Region. Grants of between £10k-£25k were available for eligible VCSO organisations to support local residents with numeracy skills.

"[WEA were] a lot more focused in terms of target and numeracy provision out in community patches. It was well received because we were going in with trusted organisations that were able to in-roads into deprived areas." - *LA strategic stakeholder*

Practical application of maths

Stakeholders broadly felt that initiatives were successful when numeracy was embedded within other skill development opportunities. Depending on the group, some found 'Maths by stealth' to be the best approach, as this avoided maths terms and standalone maths courses altogether. However, others noted successes with being upfront about the maths involved, provided it was contextualised in a subject that the learner was interested in, such as psychology, agriculture or cooking.

"Getting people who are really interested in the subjects and then demonstrating how maths is relevant to it.... at the end of the psychology course, they do an experiment. So it might be something like the Stroop test that gives you a bunch of data and then they have to apply the descriptive statistics that they learn in Multiply to that. It's quite specific and challenging." - *College stakeholder*

"By Year 2, [providers] became braver putting maths in their course titles. They would be more direct, more honest and upfront." - *LA delivery team*

Insights from Test and Learn and Family Learning programmes

Liverpool City Region used insights from their Test and Learn programme²⁴ to design Multiply courses. Colleges and Local Authorities that already had a Test and Learn function often felt more equipped to provide wraparound support for their curriculum and maths literacy support for ESOL learners.

The existing Family Learning infrastructure was also beneficial because teams often already had links to schools in the area. Their tutors also often had Disclosure and Barring

²⁴ Liverpool City Region operated a 'test and learn' programme as part of their Adult Education Budget where they trialled innovative ways of engaging with learners that they described as "ordinarily not wanting to step foot in a College". They took inspiration from the interventions trialled in this programme within Multiply to deliver more tailored learning, 'maths by stealth', and courses in collaboration with VCSO groups.

Service (DBS) checks to work with children already, were familiar with the working environment, and had a learning package that could be adapted for Multiply.

Creating more training opportunities for teaching staff

College stakeholders often reflected on the importance of CPD, especially for non-maths trained staff. It helped them to equip more of the workforce with the skills needed to teach basic maths. One stakeholder reflected that this also helped to reduce any feelings of hierarchy that existed between teachers and students as they were also learning.

Types of training that worked well were:

- **Trauma-informed approaches** as this equipped staff with the skills to deal with vulnerable students.
- **Discrete, informal classes** ran within the College rather than big workshops helped to reduce the stigma around reaching out.

“For staff to be more confident and be able to share their own experience, to say ‘Actually I’m not the most confident at this... people in the community will thrive in an environment where they’re not intimidated by the old approach to education and hierarchy.’” -
College stakeholder

7.5.6. Barriers

Strategic stakeholders felt that the main barriers to delivery in Year 2 were recruiting maths tutors, classroom capacity and overcoming the stigma around maths created in early life. Delivery stakeholders similarly flagged teaching resources as a major challenge. The other key challenge delivery stakeholders often raised was getting learners to complete enrolment paperwork.

Resourcing and capacity challenges

Overall, it was felt that there were enough school tutors to deliver family learning but that more investment was needed to train teachers to deliver basic maths in further education settings. The general feeling among delivery stakeholders was that **good maths tutors were hard to come by**. While some kept the same staff across the programme, others had to employ seasonal staff on one-year rolling contracts, which increased the risk of attrition amongst the tutors.

One College noted that the **demand had increased** since Multiply began and it made it harder to fill vacancies. Another College highlighted timetabling issues due to the small

pool of available tutors. This also made it harder to achieve consistency and familiarity with learners.

“Multiply has been the catalyst... we've taken on specialist maths staff just for Multiply. The knock on of that is there are less [staff] available in the system.” - *LA delivery team*

Classroom capacity was initially a challenge for providers who needed to incorporate a new funding stream into their timetable. However, the use of VCSOs meant that they could deliver courses in community venues instead.

Reporting requirements

Many delivery stakeholders experienced difficulties getting new learners **to complete enrolment paperwork**, especially those that came through via VCSOs, some of whom were vulnerable, struggled with literacy or did not have passports or addresses. Providers also had to account additional tutor time to help learners to complete paperwork.

“Some learners just say I'm not doing it...we have teachers go out to help them fill in the forms. So it's an additional cost to us because we have eight partners and eight sites.” - *College stakeholder*

“Some people don't have passports. They just don't have anything. So for people who are going through homelessness, where, getting them in the classroom is the biggest challenge and then asking them, could you please fill out this huge form? No chance. No chance, they won't come back.” - *College stakeholder*

Another reporting challenge was the **tracking of soft outcomes**. Those who delivered non-accredited outdoor courses struggled to log learning that happened in practice and in-situ.

“It's difficult to measure with the non-accredited learning. A lot of what we do is out in the community and we're still very paper-based because you can't get online and update Pro Monitor when you're stood in the middle of an allotment site with no Wi-Fi.” - *College stakeholder*

Other challenges

- **Managing large provider networks:** Some stakeholders had managed large networks of community partners which resulted in a risk of duplication across providers. It also made reporting more resource intensive, which impacted providers' ability to report outcomes consistently and maintain quality, although this was ironed out by Year 3 as partnerships were refined.
- **Managing footfall among VCSOs:** The promotion of Multiply and project marketing was often left to the VCSOs. While this worked well, commissioners in local areas and Colleges sometimes found it hard because they did not always know how many people would turn up to a class. One stakeholder mentioned needing to run extra classes in a local school to ensure they hit their targets.
- **Screening out maths GCSE holders:** One LA stakeholder noted that Multiply engagement activities were well attended, but that they were not able to offer it to all the parents who might be able to benefit from the courses.²⁵

“One of the barriers was that we couldn't engage any adults or parents who already had a GCSC or equivalent in maths... they were saying ‘But that was 20 years ago. I can't remember anything about it’... Sometimes it's 50% of the audience who can't come.” - *LA delivery team*

7.5.7. Opportunities for innovation

Liverpool City Region's delivery model for Multiply helped to create opportunities for innovation at a local level. Strategic stakeholders felt that this was successful primarily due to **the WEA's management of community grants** which were able to target hard to reach parts population groups and allowed for trials of new approaches to engagement. Liverpool City Region's innovative approach has **inspired other regions to follow suit.**

²⁵ DfE updated the eligibility requirements of Multiply in Year 2 of the scheme to allow learners with prior Level 2 qualifications to access the scheme.

“[Innovation] was a key cornerstone of our investment plan. We wanted to be innovative in testing new types of delivery of maths... A number of other neighbouring areas followed that tact with WEA. Lancashire then went through a similar process and Manchester have also contracted with WEA as a managing agent for those grants to community organisations.” – *Liverpool City Region MSA stakeholder*

Delivery stakeholders generally agreed that the **community-led approach** of Multiply was innovative. For some Colleges and Local Authorities, this meant they built on existing insights from Test and Learn and family learning programmes. Meanwhile some councils like Sefton were not subcontracting to community partners before Multiply, but the programme has helped them reintegrate partnership working back into their delivery model.

Some notable examples of how this translated into innovative offerings on the ground included:

Breaking down social barriers and addressing maths literacy for ESOL learners

Stakeholders often mentioned the success Multiply had with ESOL learners, including Pakistani and Iranian communities, with the focus on maths literacy as a pathway to other adult learning provision. One example of this is Riverside College, who have increased engagement with ESOL learners by offering a new ‘MATHSOL’ course aimed at breaking down maths terminology in a collaborative environment where everyone is facing similar challenges.

“They all support each other and it's a learning curve for them because it's actually the communication skills that they're working on for their English... it's helping with their confidence, they're asking questions, and then obviously they're learning the terminology of maths as well.” - *College stakeholder*

Cooking and food-based exercises have been successful for engaging refugee and other ESOL learners in numeracy. An example of this was cooking classes for ethnic minorities to help improve their maths through practical exercises such as measuring and baking. This helped to tackle numeracy by embedded maths in activities designed to support migrant communities' traditions, thereby these courses have enabled cultural exchange and made courses more culturally accessible and inclusive.

“[They say] ‘In my culture we didn't really use a recipe book, we went off taste rather than actually measuring out. Everything using scales and stuff so that that's been a breakthrough moment.” - *LA delivery team*

Embedding numeracy into practical horticulture and machinery skills

A College that delivers specialist land-management-based courses taught numeracy in tandem with growing techniques and machinery use and got learners to retrospectively reflect on how they used maths to improve their skills. This was considered particularly effective for engaging prisoners on probation, tasked with fulfilling a certain number of mandatory volunteering hours. It also had a knock-on effect as it had helped these groups improve their employability and practical knowledge.

“When you're operating a machine that you move around, you mix your oil in with your fuel and you've got to get the ratio right.. we were working on feedback from the probation service that it was a common problem because of the maths... we had people stalling machinery [so] we've done quite a bit of work on ratios and heights of cut setting blades.” - *College stakeholder*

7.5.8. Value for money perspective

Despite the level of administrative resource required, stakeholders felt Multiply had delivered good value for money. This is due to the impact on learners in terms of their **progression into formal qualifications**, as well as their improved **social and life skills**. Delivery teams were broadly happy with the allocations.

Several did mention that it was **hard to capture the full extent of the impact and value for money** of the programme, especially in terms of its social value. Areas flagged that demonstrated high value for money in this sense that were difficult to evidence included:

- Guided learning hours and smaller class sizes
- Family learning and the knock-on benefits for parents and children
- Non-accredited and stepping stone courses.

“The challenge is that non-accredited learning has had a greater value for the students. But I also see where there's a lot of trust that needs to be there from an audit perspective. It's hard.” - *College stakeholder*

7.6. Satisfaction with Multiply

7.6.1. Overall satisfaction

At a **central level**, stakeholders were generally satisfied with Multiply and the progress they have made in Years 2 and 3. They described the experience as positive and less difficult than Year 1. Having **ringfenced money for numeracy** was seen as positive as this was able to benefit 4,500 learners and got providers to focus on improving maths specifically.

However, they felt that Multiply was **resource intensive** relative to the size of its allocation which put a strain on the central function. While this was made easier by being able to draw on existing governance procedures and management infrastructure from their other Adult Skills provisions, going forward, they would like to see more efficient reporting procedures implemented for data collection.

“It's our smallest allocation. But it's actually one of the ones that takes up most of our time. It's a lot more hands-on commissioning to ensure that this programme has been successful” – *Liverpool City Region MSA stakeholder*

“Whilst Multiply's been difficult for us to land and a lot of admin burden, if this budget wasn't there, that may be 4.5 thousand residents that we didn't support...having it ring-fenced to numeracy allows us to ensure that we hone in on these numeracy requirements.” – *Liverpool City Region MSA stakeholder*

Reflections from Year 2 highlighted that **delivery teams and providers** generally felt satisfied. College stakeholders felt that a softer approach to promotion and more tailored learning options has helped them to **hook in new learners and spend more time on the quality of learning**. The removal of the pressure of qualifications has helped more learners progress into traditional education. Similarly, LA stakeholders felt that it has helped **shift cultural perceptions of maths among learners**.

“We're not exam focused and we're just able to chip away slowly at the learner's pace more so than at the curriculum's pace.” - *College stakeholder*

“It's been really good because we're challenging the perceptions of GCSE (maths) and institutionalised maths... Everything [else] is geared towards GCSE or academic maths and not necessarily the everyday functional skills maths and what that looks like.” - *LA delivery team*

7.6.2. Satisfaction with delivery and contents

Satisfaction with the teaching environment was reported as high among delivery and teaching staff. The key factors in this have been the ability to offer smaller class sizes and tailored learning opportunities, non-accredited courses and a wider variety of teaching methods to engage the latent learner.

Some examples of teaching methods stakeholders have found successful included:

- **Smaller class sizes:** Especially for ESOL learners whose anxiety also stems from speaking English.
- **Collaborative, fun activities:** TARSIA puzzles and KAHOOT (online game) create a fun and engaging environment where learners can work together and build solidarity.
- **Certificates and awards:** Postcards home and award nominations motivated learners (e.g. Liverpool City Region hosted an award ceremony).
- **Offer of maths calculators and dictionaries:** For learners to refer to, and also helped teachers to work out whether the issue is maths anxiety or comprehension.
- **Purchased books and resources:** For instance, family learning resources such as 'Spindarella' (Key Stage 1) and 'Mathematician Like Me' (Key Stage 2).
- **Community classes:** Combining maths with leisure activities at the local leisure centre helped engage parents and children.
- **Tangible incentives:** Learners who took part in cooking or exercise classes could get cooked meals or activities out of the classes.

“Anyone who did their work and got a certain score will get a celebratory postcard sent home or something like that, which honestly seems like such a small thing, but it means the world to some people.” - *College stakeholder*

This approach to teaching has also benefitted teachers. Maths teachers described learning a **broader range of teaching methods**. For instance, one tutor described how a learner showed them how they would calculate something in their culture. This has led to the teacher having more strategies to teach others.

“Since they showed me, I've been able to teach other people their methods, because they might not have got it the way I was teaching it.” - *College stakeholder*

Delivery teams have been particularly satisfied with the impact that **community-based learning** has had on **teacher-student relationships**. Teachers have been able to build a stronger rapport with individuals and get to know their needs, which ultimately helps to better support their progression pathways.

Another positive has been the ability to **run more non-accredited courses**. An LA stakeholder noted that they increased the proportion of these in Year 3 as they found they were getting more engagement and were effective as stepping stones into formal education. However, several stakeholders also noted that this did come with reporting challenges (e.g. capturing learner destinations). Some providers are therefore considering options to migrate some of their non-accredited curriculum into accredited programmes.

7.7. Outcomes and impact

7.7.1. Overall outcomes

Overall outcomes and successes reported **centrally** included:

- 4,500 learners benefitting from Multiply provision
- exceeding targets set out in their investment plan for Year 2
- getting new learners started on a long-term education pathway
- reaching more deprived communities with the lowest attainment levels
- trialling more innovative delivery approaches and building them into curricula
- improving the culture and skillsets of education workforces

- growing buy-in and engagement for Multiply among grant-funded providers

“Since they showed me, I've been able to teach other people their methods, because they might not have got it the way I was teaching it.” - *College stakeholder*

"The WA Community grants project helped us with getting out there in communities, to individuals and deprived areas who have probably got the lowest attainment levels and IMD areas for deprivation". – *Liverpool City Region MSA stakeholder*

At a delivery level, key outcomes were often related to reaching new partners and learners. For some delivery teams, it has helped to further refine the partnerships providing the most value.

“Year 2 has probably been the most promising to build onto Year 3. It's enabled us to not take on any new partners but to work with partners that actually delivered well and we're confident with.” - *LA delivery team*

Some notable examples provided were:

- A LA stakeholder noted that reducing the size of each subcontractor grant helped them to work with a wider range of partners. One notable example was a service that engaged with **vulnerable and socially isolated men**. This also helped rebalance their provision which had previously supported a greater proportion of female learners.
- Another stakeholder highlighted the value of working with ‘**Centre 63**’ in Knowsley which, through the WEA grant scheme, helped them to provide debt management and holistic help to vulnerable groups who would otherwise not have engaged.
- A College was able to expand a pre-existing partnership with **Tomorrow's Women**, a community centre for vulnerable women that also had connections to the probation system. They delivered numeracy support in pre-established community classrooms using a ‘Maths by stealth’ approach that embedded teaching topics such as mental health and hairdressing.

7.7.2. Impact on learners

Helping ESOL learners to progress

Delivery stakeholders gave numerous examples of ESOL learners progressing after having **improved their comprehension**, which demonstrated how the issue was not always skill but language. One College cited that 95% of ESOL students progressed from Multiply to a maths qualification after it helped introduce them to more maths terminology. Another noted that ESOL students were able to progress more quickly onto GSCE courses thanks to Multiply, and were able to leave the course early.

“The Multiply and ESOL wraparound programme supported learners in exiting Multiply a little bit earlier and going on to do their GSCEs.” - *College stakeholder*

This has frequently opened up **pathways into further education and employment**. An example was given of an ESOL school leaver whose participation in Multiply helped create work experience and volunteering opportunities through their increased confidence speaking English. In another instance, a learner who first engaged through one of the in-person events had gone on to study accountancy.

Academic progression also brought about changes to other areas of their lives. One College described the knock-on effect of Multiply on improving English for ESOL students including **more participation in extracurricular activities**, such as zero waste activities around the campus.

“They've been able to progress through the courses and get a maths qualification. And they've improved their English, they've made different friends. It's a rounded experience for them. It's not just about coming to learn maths. They're [also] more likely to get involved with all different projects that are running around the college.” - *College stakeholder*

Improved health and lifestyle

Another key impact has come from community-based learning approaches. Embedded numeracy in practical topics such as growing vegetables and cooking food have helped to teach learners broader skills outside of maths.

“If we're modelling that behaviour [harvesting, measuring vegetables, looking at recipes], they will do that at home, and you can't measure that level of intervention.” - *College stakeholder*

Longer term outcomes

At a central level, stakeholders saw the legacy spanning beyond the three years of the programme due to the non-linear pathway to progression that learners may take. They highlighted that someone who took part in Multiply might be ready to engage in further learning, but that their progression is not officially counted until they enter formal education, which may not be for many years due to outside circumstances.

“A key lesson for this programme is that there's not a neat solution to engaging your learner...that journey for some learners may take a number of years, because life gets in the way. And it may be when the children go into full-time education or another life barrier goes away that they're ready to step through the doors of a college, and we may only see the legacy of this programme in a couple of years' time.” - *LA strategic stakeholder*

While many stakeholders report positive outcomes anecdotally, some highlight that the data was still being synthesised. For instance, an LA stakeholder credited their Management Information System with being able to track learner progression into Functional Skills, but because their Multiply provision only became an accredited course in Year 3, they were still gathering outcome data for it.

7.7.3. Impact on Adult Learning Services

The following are highlighted as legacy areas for the delivery of Adult Education in the Liverpool City Region:

- **Improved community engagement:** Having worked with a diverse range of VCISOs partners to deliver maths to communities has helped expand Local Authorities' and Colleges' understanding of effective engagement approaches that can be used once grants have ended.
- **LA reintegration of family learning and grant-funding models:** Ensured local areas had a strong family learning function and helped those without grant funding models to reintroduce this approach.

"[Wirral] have always contracted with local VCSOs. Whereas in others such as Sefton, the art had died out and they'd lost the ability to have the systems in place. They've reintroduced that with Multiply, and they plan to continue it beyond the programme". – *Liverpool City Region MSA stakeholder*

"Reintegration of family learning as a mainstay way of delivery is something that will have longer-term implications for us about how we think about rolling out future programmes." - *Liverpool City Region MSA stakeholder*

- **Colleges expanded their target market:** An unexpected outcome that strategic stakeholders noticed was that Colleges that traditionally did not cater to entry-level learners have now expanded their curriculum, as they have seen the benefits through Multiply.
- **Upskilled maths tutors:** A huge legacy point several colleges mentioned is workforce CPD. It is something many said that they would invest more in if they were to be given more funding. This has also had an impact on learners, such as having helped address neurodiversity in learning needs and by diversified teaching approaches to be more personalised to individuals.

"Keeping tutors up to date with how they can support their learners. We do get quite a lot of neurodiverse learners. And so we've done quite a bit of training on that." - *LA strategic stakeholder*

- **Diversified the provider pipeline to smaller VCSOs:** Another outcome of sub-contracting has been the ability to help Local Authorities and Colleges refine their provider network and find the ones providing the most value. One LA pointed out that this has helped them to shift the monopoly of provision from larger organisations to more niche, specialist groups.

"Year 2 was particularly challenging because it was the year that we tried to take on some new providers. But what we did find was a couple of golden gems that were really able to delve into their specialism... not enable larger organisations to monopolise the provision" - *College stakeholder*

- **Shifted the culture in local areas:** Since Multiply, stakeholders have noticed conversations shifting within departments to talks more about how to support learners who are not ready for accredited courses and how to support professional development.

7.8. Future plans

The priority at a **central level** was to **merge Multiply into AEB**, using pre-existing grant funded provider agreements through AEB and moving programmes into their existing budget. However, stakeholders anticipated challenges with this as Multiply was set-up to be distinct from AEB. Nonetheless, they felt there are numerous learnings and good practices that can be carried over. Although they would like to replicate the Multiply approach to other areas of adult skills, stakeholders were limited by budget. They intended to look for opportunities following the upcoming budget (Autumn 2024).

Merging with AEB was also anticipated to make reaching certain learner groups more challenging as many sub-contracted partners are not Ofsted registered. Losing the ability to engage with non-Ofsted approved VCOSOs was therefore viewed as a barrier to engaging with learners who may not be ready for formal systems of education.

Delivery partners were similarly concerned about the financial viability of continuing Multiply offerings, referencing potentially having to pause tailored learning or stopping offering courses altogether until they could apply for more funding. They also highlighted ways in which they planned to **extend its legacy**:

- Moving aspects that are working well into their test and learn programme.
- Training non-maths tutors to teach basic numeracy skills.
- Continuing to offer CPD modules online.
- Migrating family learning packages over into accredited courses.

“We've offered training to staff who work in those third party sector. At least if we don't get the funding anymore, they'll have staff in their organisation that have a Level 3 teaching award. So they're able to do training of their own should they need to.” - *College stakeholder*

Looking ahead to partnership working opportunities, a delivery stakeholder has noted that there can sometimes be competition among providers. To address this, they have instigated a **'community education network'** for key stakeholders and partners to work together to address education gaps.

8. North East Combined Authority case study

8.1. Case study context

Fieldwork for the North East Combined Authority (North East CA) case study was completed between the 20th of November and the 10th of December 2024, during Year 3 of Multiply delivery. A total of eight interviews were conducted with stakeholders from the MCA.

The North East CA is an urban Mayoral Strategic Authority, based in the North East. It had a small budget of £4,128,607 during the three years of the Multiply programme. It was selected as a case study because it was a new Strategic Authority created in the middle of the Multiply programme, achieved success working with community organisations, and worked with a range of independent providers to target different population groups during the programme.

8.2. Topline summary

As part of the Multiply programme, the North East CA provided funding for Northumberland Council, North Tyneside Council, and Newcastle Council and six further independent provider organisations who delivered Multiply interventions across all three of the areas. In addition to stakeholders from the three Council's, Verian also interviewed three of these independent providers as part of this research: Thriving Together Northumberland, Winnovation, and the Northern Learning Trust.

Variation

Multiply delivery varied between the different local areas and provider organisations. Some local areas and providers delivered Multiply courses in-house, while others worked with or managed sub-providers as part of their delivery.

Demand

There has been lots of interest in the Multiply programme within the region, and stakeholders generally felt that the programme built on the existing strategic objectives of the region. The North East CA outlined that their broad objectives with Multiply were to support learners to be able to get functional skills qualifications, target areas with high levels of deprivation, and support people within employment or those who were actively seeking employment.

Collaboration

North East CA and local area stakeholders, as well as providers, were positive about the collaboration that has been taking place during the Multiply programme. They emphasised how regular meetings conducted by the North East CA ensured that the programme was delivered effectively and supported best practice being shared among different organisations and individuals. This included quarterly, in-person, programme meetings, monthly individual catchups with delivery stakeholders, and quarterly assurance exercises.

Engaging community groups

When engaging external organisations, local area stakeholders highlighted that they faced **initial challenges building relationships with local community groups in particular**. However, once they were able to use their initial examples of course delivery and demonstrated the offering with marketing materials for the programme, they found these relationships were easier to establish. As a comparison, the three provider organisations Verian interviewed had more success engaging community organisations due to their pre-existing relationships and networks.

Engaging employers

Employer engagement was a challenge across the North East CA. Employers did not always see the value of the Multiply offer and, at times, were hesitant to release employees for non-accredited courses.

Recruitment

Stakeholders used a range of methods to recruit learners to Multiply programmes. They commonly referenced having received referrals for learners (from employers, tutors delivering different courses, and other learners), reached learners through relationships with local community organisations, and used marketing and social media campaigns to target learners.

Flexibility

The **flexibility of Multiply funding and the ability to deliver shorter courses** facilitated successful delivery. The promotion of Multiply through in-person engagement and word-of-mouth, as well as advertising Multiply courses by using learner-centred messaging, was also effective. However, there were also a range of challenges mentioned, these included the ability to reach employers, difficulties with the initial set-up process for local areas, and administrative burden.

Positive feedback

Stakeholders within the North East CA were overwhelmingly positive about the Multiply programme. They highlighted its learner-focused approach had a meaningful impact for learners and moved away from a focus on rigid qualification frameworks. Multiply was praised for boosting learner confidence, serving as a bridge to further functional skills programmes or accredited courses. Where employers engaged with the programme, it upskilled workers, and therefore improved workplace performance. It also enabled the North East CA to reach and engage with previously hard to reach communities.

As the Combined Authority was only created in May 2024 any future legacy plans were unclear at the time of interviews, but North East CA were in the process of creating a new skills strategy.

8.3. Strategic overview

8.3.1. Background to local area

Over the course of the Multiply programme, funding was provided to Northumberland Council, North Tyneside Council, and Newcastle Council along with six further independent provider organisations who delivered across all three of the areas. At the start of Multiply, the programme was managed by strategic stakeholders in the Adult Skills team at NTCA. When the North East CA was created in May 2024, the same stakeholders from NTCA continued to manage delivery within the new combined authority.²⁶

Throughout this case study, when reference is made to delivery within the North East CA or stakeholders from the North East CA, please note that this is referring to the same stakeholders who would have previously worked at the NTCA and their delivery on the Multiply programme before it was disbanded.

The population of the North of Tyne Combined Authority was 870,000; North East CA now covers 2.05 million residents. The area is economically and geographically diverse, with large urban centres, rural areas and coastal zones. Pockets of deprivation are found in both urban and rural areas, with associated skills shortages.

Within delivery, the three councils had an allocation which they delivered through their own adult skills programmes within their geographical catchment area. Stakeholders at the North East CA also worked with six further independent partners which delivered across

²⁶ As a result of the Levelling Up White Paper, the North of Tyne CA was expanded to create the NECA by including the local authorities of Gateshead, South Tyneside, Durham, and Sunderland. Delivery of the Multiply programme began before this devolution deal, and, as such, the programme was only delivered in the NECA within these three original local areas.

all the local areas in the Combined Authority and had delivered a range of other interventions. As such, the North East CA managed and reported on the activities of three local areas and six further independent partners as part of the Multiply programme.

As part of this case study research, interviews were conducted with the delivery lead at the North East CA, and the LA delivery leads in Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle Council. Individual interviews were also completed with the curriculum leads in North Tyneside and Northumberland Council as well as Newcastle College (who were responsible for the delivery of the programme in Newcastle Council). Interviews were also conducted with three of the six independent providers. These three providers were directly contracted and received their funding from the North East CA. Specifically, interviews were conducted with:

- Thriving Together Northumberland (associated with Citizens Advice Northumberland)
- Winnovation
- Northern Learning Trust

8.3.2. Multiply alignment with wider strategic objectives

Strategic objectives of the North Tyne Combined Authority and later the North East CA

The strategic leads at the North East CA outlined their key objectives were:²⁷

1. **To support learners and residents to be able to get functional skills qualifications.** This was particularly important as they were described by LA stakeholders as an area with low attainment of basic skills for their residents.
2. **To target areas with high deprivation**, this equipped people with the skills to budget and manage their finances accordingly. Specifically, the North East CA had a focus around reducing child poverty.
3. **To focus on employers** and how they supported people in employment or those actively seeking employment to have the correct numeracy skills for their role.

The North East CA reported that the Multiply programme was very well received locally, with particular interest from Council members and other senior Combined Authority stakeholders. The delivery lead at the North East CA felt the Multiply programme built on existing strategic objectives in the region which may have contributed to this.

²⁷ Strategic stakeholders highlighted that their key objectives as part of the delivery of Multiply remained the same throughout the Multiply programme as part of both the North Tyne Combined Authority and the North East Combined Authority.

Strategic objectives at the LA level

- **Newcastle Council:** Stakeholders from Newcastle Council particularly emphasised how the Multiply programme aligned with their long-term objective around supporting inclusive employment. They described how Multiply helped them reach those with primary skills barriers (typically related to numeracy, literacy, or difficulties with IT) that stopped them getting into work. They also provided more flexible provision to those associated with voluntary sector organisations, delivered more one-to-one provision, and developed a renewed focus on working with employers in the region.
- **Northumberland Council:** LA stakeholders felt that Multiply helped support their objectives around improving the employability of individuals within their Council. They emphasised the importance of community-based delivery and explained that they saw Multiply as a means for engagement to bring people into learning that may not have been previously engaged.
- **North Tyneside Council:** Likewise, stakeholders here also stated that they had a focus on basic skills for those getting into employment within their Council. Beyond this, they also felt that Multiply helped them to deliver initiatives with increased creativity and flexibility. Through the delivery of courses that were less 'formal' they were able to reach a broader range of learners.

8.3.3. Stakeholder feedback on design

Many stakeholders from both LA and providers organisations were positive about the flexibility provided by Multiply, both in terms of funding and delivery. They regularly highlighted the benefits of being able to deliver courses with increased flexibility to reach new learners. For example, stakeholders in North Tyneside mentioned that the programme allowed them to deliver one-to-one sessions that were not bound by qualifications or exams, which was particularly effective in engaging hard-to-reach learners.

In terms of the design of the Multiply programme around the 'menu of interventions'²⁸, there were some differing views between local areas.

- Strategic stakeholders in North Tyneside felt that building provision around the 'menu' meant that there was less overlap between Multiply and Adult Education Budget (AEB) programmes, where all areas would deliver the same level 2 learner engagement. They also felt that there were lots of different contract routes available within Multiply's design, which limited the amount of overlap

²⁸ The Multiply programme offers a menu of numeracy interventions to support local areas to identify the right provision which they can then deliver locally. The menu was based on the barriers that hold people back from addressing their numeracy needs.

between the different local areas and providers in the North East CA. In addition, both local areas and providers within the North East CA often delivered within different elements ('lanes') on the Multiply programme. One stakeholder felt the fact that that local areas' delivery within North East CA did not overlap led to increased collaboration between different local areas and provider organisations.

- A Newcastle Council stakeholder, in contrast, felt that there was some initial duplication in provision across North East CA areas, despite the range of options outlined in the 'menu'. However, this concern has eased as local authorities and providers have become better aligned and understood each other's offers through ongoing discussions.

"Because there were so many different contract routes available through the grant and we had to make sure we were looking at the different strands it meant that we weren't on top of each other with provision and duplication and it wasn't as competitive." - *North Tyneside Council stakeholder*

"From a Newcastle point of view, it did feel like there was a bit of competition early on. There's quite a lot of provision and different providers within Newcastle. It didn't feel as clear as OK, you know these people are in this lane and these people are in this lane and there's no duplication. It did feel a little bit like actually those two organisations are doing something very similar to what we're wanting to do. It took a bit of work teasing out and clarifying to try to avoid that duplication." - *Newcastle Council stakeholder*

8.4. Programme set-up

8.4.1. Internal collaborations and partnerships

Organisation of partners at the Combined Authority level

North East CA coordinated and monitored partners in the following ways:

- **A quarterly programme meeting with North East CA** which all three of the local areas and all six of the providers attended as part of Multiply delivery. These meetings were held in person, and they rotated the responsibility for hosting the meeting between each LA and provider. The meetings were

designed to provide local areas and providers with a platform to share their experience, learnings, and ideas as the programme progressed.

- **Monthly individual catch-ups with North East CA and each provider.** These were generally quite short and consisted of general discussions about the providers' delivery progress.

Local areas' perspective on collaboration

The programme meetings and internal collaboration facilitated by the North East CA were well received by the three local areas.

- **Quarterly programme meetings, especially early on, supported strategy development** for engaging hard-to-reach learners and were felt to be very open, collaborative, productive discussions.
- **Monthly contract meetings between North East CA and local areas** were seen as highly valuable for tracking delivery progress and performance.
- **Grant funding meetings** helped local areas navigate financial year-based funding timelines and understand the various contract routes within Multiply.

“Sometimes forums like that, people are quite guarded and closed with what they share. But people were open about sharing their successes and failures. This was helped by the fact that it was all new.” - *Newcastle Council stakeholder*

Providers' perspective on collaboration

The delivery partners Verian spoke with all felt that collaboration with North East CA - and other local areas within the North East CA as part of the Multiply programme - was beneficial to organisational learning and delivery on the programme.

One of these delivery partners, Thriving Together, also held additional quarterly meetings with their sub-providers (both in person and online) and mirrored the format of the wider programme meetings. These sessions allowed sub-providers to raise issues and receive updates from North East CA via Thriving Together.

Thriving Together stakeholders felt that the meetings improved engagement and collaboration and had enabled smoother learner referrals between sub-providers - for example, they were able to progress individuals from one course to a more advanced or different numeracy course with another provider.

8.4.2. Partner engagement

At the local authority level, stakeholders often faced initial challenges engaging external community partners in the Multiply programme. In Northumberland and North Tyneside, relationships with community organisations took time to build and had to be factored into delivery plans. To improve engagement, they later used examples from early programme activities as case studies to promote Multiply, which helped build credibility and increased participation with the programme among community groups.

In contrast, some providers had early success with local partnerships with community groups. Newcastle College, who were responsible for delivery in Newcastle Council, worked with three community partners: Newcastle United Foundation, Children North East, and PRS Inclusion. These three organisations were contacted as part of the original Multiply bids within Newcastle and so were in place before the programme began. They had a wealth of experience in engaging community organisations and pre-existing relationships with lots of other local organisations so found it easy to engage other local partnerships. Another example of this can be seen through the provider organisation, Northern Learning Trust, who saw early success due to their strong local networks and experience with hard-to-reach learners. Within six months, Northern Learning Trust had already delivered to 200 learners, which had exceeded their annual delivery target. They attributed their rapid mobilisation to existing community ties (including access to learners and tutors) and transferable experience from literacy programmes.

“So we already had very experienced and talented staff. We already had a good community footprint, we knew the subject, we knew the learners, we were able to just gear up really quickly.” - *Northern Learning Trust stakeholder*

8.4.3. Target audience selection

The majority of local areas and providers that worked on the Multiply programme in the North East CA highlighted that their focus was on trying to engage hard-to-reach learners who were not already being engaged in adult education. Stakeholders regularly emphasised that they felt Multiply provided them with an opportunity to **reach new learners with more creative and flexible forms of delivery**. Local areas and providers outlined the importance of having relationships with local organisations when targeting harder to reach learners.

Newcastle Council, for example, highlighted that as part of their delivery on Multiply, they were able to reach around 600 learners a year in courses which were not previously reached through their existing delivery. They also highlighted that the programme **allowed them to deliver more bespoke courses to engage community organisations** or that

may not have normally taken part in numeracy education. These groups ranged from an organisation focused on supporting individuals with their wood working skills, to a Chinese learning centre where the Multiply team delivered a specialist budgeting skills course.

One provider, Northern Learning Trust, targeted hard-to-reach learners **through social housing providers in areas with high levels of poverty**. They used seven community centres within their delivery of Multiply which had been established as part of their broader community activities in collaboration with the providers that were at the heart of the local communities.

Thriving Together **strategically selected sub-providers** to reach audiences less accessible through traditional AEB delivery. Their partners included: Being Woman (ethnic minorities), Northern Butterflies (individuals with learning or developmental needs), Community Action Northumberland (rural outreach), and Northern Learning Trust (school and family learning). They also used tailored engagement methods, such as the inclusion of support staff in sessions and they kept activities fun to attract hard-to-reach learners.

In addition, local areas and providers also outlined their focus on **trying to reach employer organisations due to their broader strategic goal of reaching those within employment or who were actively seeking employment** as part of delivery on Multiply. Stakeholders outlined that they attempted to create flexible programmes that were targeted towards specific employers to reach these groups.

“As a college, we are based in an area where there is a lot of deprivation and a lot of unemployed residents that are just not willing or feel they're not able to engage in education. So, I think the biggest stand out is that Multiply has allowed us to get into some community groups to engage with residents.” - *Newcastle College stakeholder*

8.4.4. Employer engagement

A **core objective for Multiply within North East CA was engaging employers to support workers and jobseekers in developing essential numeracy skills**. At the local and provider level, there was some success with targeted interventions - Winnovation worked with the health and social care sector, while Newcastle College successfully engaged Nestlé employees following a local factory closure and offered upskilling opportunities to 450 workers who had been made redundant.

However, **other local areas and providers faced challenges with engaging employers**. These included employers' limited understanding of Multiply's broad offer, reluctance to release staff for non-accredited training, and scheduling conflicts during busy

work periods. These issues are explored further in Section 8.5.7, 'Areas for improvement in delivery'.

8.5. Programme delivery

8.5.1. Overall structure

The North East CA provided funding for Northumberland Council, North Tyneside Council, and Newcastle Council as part of the Multiply programme. These three local areas have an allocation which they deliver through their adult skills programme in their geographical catchment.

North East CA then also worked with six further independent providers who delivered across all three LA areas on other interventions. The North East CA managed the delivery of the three local areas (reported on their activities to the DfE) and the six further independent delivery partners.

Within the different local areas and delivery partner organisations, Multiply delivery varies significantly. Some local areas and providers delivered Multiply courses entirely in-house, in which they used existing staff and in-house teams, while others worked with or managed sub-contractors / sub-providers as part of their delivery. The next two sections, 8.5.2 and 8.5.3, will break down how programme delivery was managed within these different organisations.

8.5.2. Delivery at the Local Authority level

All of the delivery on Multiply within **Northumberland Council** was conducted in-house. Likewise, within **North Tyneside Council**, the delivery of Multiply courses was embedded into different programmes at the Council and delivered in-house.

Newcastle Council utilised their delivery arm Newcastle City Learning to deliver the contract and also worked closely with Newcastle College as a delivery partner. Newcastle College was responsible for the general operational side of delivery, where they worked to set up the curriculum, engage learners, and monitor outcomes.

All the local areas highlighted that they saw Multiply as a means for engagement with learners who they may not have engaged previously. They emphasised that as part of Multiply, they have increased their creativity and flexibility in delivery and tried to deliver courses that were less formal, because they felt that the functional skills element has typically been less engaging for learners.

North Tyneside Council partnered with local community organisations to offer informal, practical courses, such as a 6-week budget cooking course at a church and similar

sessions at Cedarwood Community Pantry and Café, tailored for regular centre users. Northumberland Council also increased their outreach and community-based delivery of courses on Multiply. For example, they had a relationship with Thriving Together Northumberland, one of the delivery partners that received funding directly from the North East CA.

8.5.3. Delivery at the Delivery Partner level

Thriving Together Northumberland

Thriving Together Northumberland did not deliver provision directly, instead they managed the Multiply partnership for six other organisations who functioned as sub-providers (Citizens Advice, Community Action Northumberland, Northern Butterfly, Digital Voice, Being Women, and Northern Learning Trust). They received funding from the North East CA and then distributed it to the six organisations to deliver interventions. Stakeholders from Thriving Together highlighted that each of their six sub-partners target and have specialism working with a different demographic or population groups in the region.

Winnovation

Winnovation is a training provider on Multiply, who covered the health and social care sector, and operated across Newcastle, Northumberland, and North Tyneside. Winnovation covered learning from entry level to level 5 maths (in the form of apprenticeships and bootcamps). They are a small organisation with 24 employees and three employed tutors working specifically on Multiply.

As part of their delivery, they worked with employers and unemployed individuals – all in the context of care. They mainly delivered courses within residential settings for adult care and early years residential care where they co-designed courses with the employers they worked with. These courses often focused on practical elements like medication errors (e.g., conversion rate from millilitres to centilitres) and incorporated real sector materials (e.g., syringes or bottles) that enhanced interactivity. Additionally, rather than hiring new staff, Winnovation redeployed experienced tutors to deliver Multiply courses; they stressed that hand-on experience was essential for teaching care-related skills.

“All my staff are long-serving staff with experience in the sector... it takes a special person to work in health and social care, the skills you develop within person-centred care, you learn by supporting people, not from a book. You can't learn how to change someone's catheter from a book, you've got to have delivered medication and seen MAR (Medical Administration Record) sheets to be able to put health and social care in the context of Multiply, it's all hands on experience." - *Winnovation stakeholder*

Northern Learning Trust

The Northern Learning Trust also directly delivered Multiply courses to learners. They worked with both the North East CA and had additional contracts with South Tyneside and Durham Councils to deliver courses on the programme. They are a small organisation with 28 members of staff, but only five full-time staff.

As part of their delivery within the North East CA, they focused on adult short courses, in particular one-to-one intensive courses and family learning courses. These family learning courses were delivered in children's centres, nurseries, and schools. Across the programme, the Trust worked with 30 schools within the North East CA.

8.5.4. Programme management and tracking

Programme meetings facilitated by the North East CA

A key element of programme management for the North East CA was the organised quarterly programme meetings held as part of Multiply delivery (mentioned previously in relation to programme set up). These meetings normally lasted for 1 hour and 30 minutes, were held in-person, and centred around discussions on the delivery of local areas and the providers in the quarter and their plans for the next quarter. All the stakeholders were very positive about these meetings. Additionally, the North East CA also facilitated quarterly one-to-one review meetings with both local areas and providers.

“I think a lot of it was practice sharing, sharing ideas, people being very open about what they were doing. It didn't feel quite as competitive as a lot of other contracts can be so people were very open and lots of people were taking things in different directions. It was quite a good opportunity for us all to be very transparent about the ways of hitting targets.” - *North Tyneside Council stakeholder*

Programme tracking at the Combined Authority level

The North East CA required local areas and provider organisations to report on a range of different metrics on a **quarterly** basis as part of programme tracking and monitoring. These included:

- Number of learners enrolled
- Number of learners on the different programmes
- How many learners completed each programme
- Location of delivery
- Basic demographic information of learners

- Project spend and budget

The North East CA also stated that they occasionally asked additional ad-hoc questions to local areas and providers during this quarterly reporting process.

In addition to the above data reporting, some local areas and providers shared information on:

- The destination of learners – where they have gone after completion.
- The North East CA also tried to encourage case studies of learner experience on the courses to be shared from local areas and providers. They aimed to receive around three of these a month.

The North East CA also carried out an **additional quarterly ‘assurance exercise’** on Multiply with the three councils as well as the six provider organisations that they worked with. Here, they selected two to three providers per month to submit their learner records for that month. As part of this exercise, they looked at how many learners were submitted as enrolments for that month and the relevant paperwork in relation to the learner from the provider (e.g., their enrolment form, action plan, class register). They also checked that the learner was eligible for the course that they were signed up for (through correct age and Maths qualifications). They could then follow-up with the provider if there were any concerns with specific learners on the programme. The North East CA reported that they have not encountered any issues with providers misreporting learner numbers so far on Multiply.

The North East CA then used this data to report to their steering group on the progress of delivery on Multiply and who the programme has reached. The data was also used for news and press releases and was sent to DfE.

Programme tracking at the LA level

Comparatively, programme tracking at the LA level varied. Both Northumberland and North Tyneside Council described tracking learners after they finished a course where learners were contacted six months after the course was completed (e.g., tracked learner destinations into employment, further education, or volunteering).

Newcastle College, who worked as a delivery partner for Newcastle Council, reported tracking a number of further metrics on top of learner destinations, which included softer outcomes such as how learners have developed in confidence levels during their courses. They also regularly recorded tutor feedback on learners, and every learner had specific data stored about their individual learner plan. The College stated that this was not a requirement of Multiply, but something they did for best practice.

Communications and outreach

Stakeholders from local areas and providers used various methods to recruit learners, with **referrals being the most common**. Referrals tended to come from employers, tutors, or other learners.

Northumberland Council found tutor referrals effective - for example, when ESOL tutors identified learners needing maths support.

Winnovation relied heavily on word-of-mouth and used early sign-ups to attract more learners. Northumberland also benefited from an existing relationship with Jobcentre Plus, which referred learners not yet ready for functional skills courses.

“Spamming the world with these achievements, every great achievement will be publicised, and linked back to the programme, I think it’s so important that everyone sees the impact of this public funding. I don’t think we shout loud enough.” - *Winnovation stakeholder*

Additionally, stakeholders regularly outlined the importance of having **relationships with local community groups**. While provider organisations often felt that they had existing relationships with local groups that were in place prior to Multiply, LA stakeholders often had to invest time in trying to build engagement with these groups to promote Multiply.

“It’s important to get out and meet them, faceless emails wouldn’t work. We started to attend an organisation called the West End children’s community to get the word out. Once one was engaged it was a lot easier to engage with others.” - *Newcastle College stakeholder*

All stakeholders also mentioned using **marketing** to promote Multiply. This was done either through leaflets, which were often placed in targeted locations such as local colleges or community centres, and social media campaigns. Some local areas mentioned producing a social media campaign that followed on from the National Numeracy Week campaign.

LA and providers also mentioned promoting Multiply through their own newsletters by highlighting “good news stories”, with mixed success. Some stakeholders felt that these broader promotional efforts were not as successful as marketing through word-of-mouth or by building relationships with local community groups.

8.5.6. Facilitators to delivery

Adapting courses and delivery to the learner

In interviews, stakeholders stressed the importance of starting from learners' current maths abilities rather than focusing on qualifications. This learner-centred approach helped broaden reach and improve impact. Many described Multiply's bespoke nature as "very refreshing."

Flexibility of funding

Local areas and provider organisations praised the structure of funding on Multiply and stated that it was a lot more flexible than what they were used to on different programmes. Local areas also stated that they felt the pricing model on Multiply was easier to understand. They felt that funding models on other schemes were often outdated and set "10 or more years ago".

Benefits of shorter courses

Some stakeholders felt that the use of short courses on Multiply helped to engage more learners that would have been put off by a longer course. For example, stakeholders from Newcastle College planned to deliver a high number of longer-courses (12+ hour courses) in year 1 but found it hard to engage learners with this format. In year 2 they shifted to a plan to deliver initial shorter courses to build up learner confidence, before trying to transition these learners to longer courses. The College highlighted that in year 2 they were able to progress 65 learners from initial short courses to accredited courses.

Reporting templates for providers

Stakeholders from the North East CA stated that during the first year of Multiply they did not provide any reporting templates to providers. This meant that the outputs that they received from providers were quite varied and often incompatible for reporting to DfE which led to a lot of meetings with the provider organisations on their submissions to understand the varying terms and definitions used. After the first year of the programme, they introduced a specific reporting template for providers. This was seen as really helpful and more efficient for delivery.

Word-of-mouth and in-person promotion

A few local areas and providers stated they felt that they were more successful at engaging learners when they were able to interact directly with community organisations to organically promote the Multiply programme. They described the importance of "getting out and meeting community groups" rather than "sending out random faceless emails" when trying to get buy-in for the programme.

“Hiding the maths” in the promotion of Multiply courses:

Local areas and providers reported having success when advertising Multiply courses by “stealth”. These organisations mentioned “hiding the maths” on Multiply courses through other activities such as cooking, crafts, and money-saving courses.

8.5.7. Areas for improvement in delivery

Engagement of employers

Getting employers to engage was very challenging for many of the local areas and providers involved in delivery in the North East CA. They emphasised that employers could not always release groups of their workforce for courses. They also stated that, as part of Multiply, the front-line delivery staff were often the most in-need of classes but were also the least likely to be released by employers. Northumberland Council also mentioned that employers only wanted to release their employees for accredited courses.

Getting employers to understand what Multiply was offering

Some stakeholders felt that employers did not understand how Multiply worked in the early stages due to the broad nature of its offering. This meant that some organisations felt that they needed to streamline their offer on Multiply. For example, North Tyneside described originally trying to target employers through business parks and areas where they could pull together larger groups to offer tuition online. But they realised this did not address any “specific employer problems or issues” and was too generic. So, at the end of the second year of Multiply, they began to deliver an excel-based course to employers that they felt aligned more directly to their needs. The Council reported that this course has meant that they were now achieving their employer targets for the first time during the programme.

Initial mobilisation

At the start of Multiply, local areas highlighted that they were slower to understand that the programme was not as prescriptive as other courses and they could be more creative. Local areas felt that through conversations with provider organisations they realised that they could be more flexible to meet learner needs and demand.

Delivery of substantive courses to certain learners

Despite the success of some local areas and providers when delivering shorter courses and interventions, certain stakeholders felt that they would have wanted to deliver more substantive courses. Stakeholders stated that learners were often more likely to drop-out on these courses, and they found engagement more difficult.

Administration

Some stakeholders reported that they felt Multiply brought about an administrative burden that was difficult to manage. The Northern Learning Trust felt that this burden was particularly true for smaller organisations. They described facing difficulties around managing individualised learner record (ILR) data. They stated that most larger colleges and charities would have a management information tool that would link with the DfE, but smaller organisations had to collect this data and record it manually. The need to keep track of data from all of the learners that took part in the course was seen as quite a challenge for the organisation and they had to bring someone in to specifically do this task (a business support assistant).

Engaging learners reluctant to share personal details

Providers reported that some learners were quite hesitant to give away personal details that were required as part of Multiply. These providers felt that ethnic minority groups were more likely to be hesitant in these situations. In response, providers described creating a form to reassure participants about the programme. This slightly helped to improve sign-ups, but some learners were still dissuaded.

8.5.8. Opportunities for innovation

Stakeholders have highlighted that **Multiply has allowed them to deliver courses that have supported learners in ways that go beyond improving their maths ability.** These stakeholders mentioned that by delivering courses that “hide maths” they have also been able to teach learners other skills that will benefit them in their daily life. They emphasised that this was unique to Multiply. For example, stakeholders from North Tyneside and Northumberland Council highlighted that as part of Multiply, they focused learning on a “healthy living” theme which taught numeracy skills alongside supporting learners with managing budgets, shopping for ingredients, converting measurements, and cooking healthy recipes. Stakeholders also felt that this form of provision helped improve the focus on learners during Multiply courses.

“We really added value to the learner’s life. These were some learners who were really in financial distress, I don’t think they were feeding themselves properly.” - *Northumberland Council stakeholder*

“If you had sat down with the learners with a notebook, and said ‘we’re going to do these sums, we’re going to add up X, Y and Z’, they wouldn’t have wanted to do that, they wouldn’t have been able to do that...but by delivering in a very creative way, measuring ingredients out, and then doing a little bit of creative cooking, the learner was able to focus and feel like they were not in a mainstream classroom.” - *NECA stakeholder*

Online learning tool

Northumberland Council created an online tool to accompany learning for learners. This online, Padlet, tool was designed to be used in between classes. The tool was formatted as an online interactive board that featured useful links to expert maths advice, extra learning content associated with the delivery on the course, funny videos related to the maths being taught, and additional learning links from government and third sector sources (e.g., content from Money Saving Expert and Citizens Advice). At the end of each class, learners received a link to the Padlet tool and could also scan a QR code to access the programme. Learners could also interact with each other on the portal.

“It’s a good hook, as lot of learners don’t like Maths, but they like technology, can do it on their phone.” - *Northumberland Council stakeholder*

"It's a one stop shop for info, and when I add something on, the users...see you've added something new on, and they can go in. It's simple to set up... it's quite useful." - *Northumberland Council stakeholder*

Collaboration with social housing providers

The delivery of Multiply courses by the Northern Learning Trust in association with social housing providers was also unique. The Northern Learning Trust established projects in Northumberland and Newcastle with social housing providers in estates that had high levels of poverty. In working with these social housing providers, they were allowed to use houses, church halls, or community centres, which were converted into learning centres, to deliver Multiply courses. They created seven of these learning centres across the region, where there was one teacher in each centre who was then supported by volunteers. Stakeholders at the Trust described that these centres were at the heart of the community, which helped establish trust with the local community and provided a clearer pathway for referrals to Multiply courses.

8.5.9. Value for money perspective

Stakeholders at the North East CA felt that the funding for Multiply was spent effectively. They emphasised that the existence of quarterly reporting and one-to-one quarterly review meetings for those engaged on the scheme ensured that local areas and provider organisations were delivering efficiently. The quarterly assurance exercise (where two to three providers submitted learner records before the North East CA conducted an assurance review) also provided further reassurance to the Combined Authority that Multiply was being delivered successfully.

“I’m really pleased to say that there’s never been any issues with any of our providers in terms of their learner records. We’ve been satisfied every single time that the learner records have been submitted.” -
NECA stakeholder

The provider organisations working on the programme also echoed this perception. They felt that the demand from learners was consistent throughout the programme once the scheme was established. Some of the provider organisations also had additional measures in place to ensure that they were delivering efficiently. For example, Thriving Together Northumberland worked with sub-providers as part of their delivery on Multiply and conducted a re-profiling exercise on a monthly basis where they adjusted targets for their sub-providers based on how they were delivering in comparison to their previous target. This helped to ensure that they would be on track to reach their cumulative target set by the North East CA.

8.6. Satisfaction with Multiply

8.6.1. Overall satisfaction

Overall, stakeholders across North East CA, local areas and provider organisations were very positive about their delivery on the Multiply programme. They regularly emphasised that they were disappointed that the programme will not be funded past March 2025. The North East CA specifically reported that they had received much more positive feedback on Multiply from provider organisations compared to the more established courses they deliver.

Local Authority satisfaction with Multiply

The overall delivery experience of the three local areas within the North East CA was very positive. This was driven by:

- **Flexibility of the funding on Multiply:** The ability to be adaptable Multiply delivery and provision was important for its success as a scheme. This allowed local areas to adapt their offering to suit this learner preference and engaged more learners than they might have done otherwise.
- **The impact on learners' day to day lives:** Stakeholders involved with the direct delivery of the scheme (curriculum leads and programme managers) emphasised that they have encountered lots of real-life examples where delivery has improved the day-to-day livelihoods of local residents. For example, stakeholders regularly referenced the benefits that Multiply courses have had on the spending habits of learners, particularly with how the courses have supported learners to manage budgets when cooking and promoted increased financial responsibility.
- **New learners engaged:** This was seen as a success, as Newcastle Council reported that they had reached 600 learners per year through Multiply, who would not have engaged previously.

“It was very refreshing because we had lots of freedom and flexibility which allowed us to meet learners where they were. It can be underestimated how important that is in this sector, especially for local authorities, when we are trying to work with some of those who are the furthest from skills and the labour market, who perhaps need the most time.” - *North Tyneside Council stakeholder*

- **“Hiding” maths in day-to-day activities:** LA stakeholders felt that this approach used on Multiply to make maths more accessible has been very successful in reaching new learners. The focus on improving learners' confidence was important in helping them to transition into formal qualifications.
- **Use of one-to-one interventions:** A range of LA stakeholders also praised the use of one-to-one interventions on Multiply. For example, in North Tyneside, stakeholders described the benefits of using a one-to-one Multiply intervention to support individuals doing a functional skills maths level 2 course.

“The one-to-one sessions that are built into the contract and were well structured in terms of the costs. So for us that was something that we could never had really had before, although we wanted to work with small classes that benefit our learners, it’s not financially always very efficient when we are being paid in qualificatory payments. So it was really helpful being able to do one-to-one work with adults because that is what is needed by those that are the furthest away from achieving qualifications.” - *North Tyneside Council stakeholder*

However, there were some issues noted **around a lack of demand for numeracy learning among employers**. For example, Northumberland Council had hoped to have more engagement with employers. They felt that hat the lack of a direct qualification from Multiply has meant that engaging learners through job centres has been challenging. More generally, Northumberland Council also felt that they could have handled more demand on the scheme.

“We have had to use every power of persuasion to get people to actually enrol...it’s really needed, but there is no demand for maths learning directly.” - *Northumberland Council stakeholder*

Provider satisfaction with Multiply

All three provider organisations interviewed were very satisfied with their delivery on Multiply:

- **Thriving Together** emphasised that lots of people have benefited from the courses they delivered on the Multiply programme. They highlighted that they overachieved on their delivery targets.
- **Winnovation**, similarly, had success in their delivery. They emphasised that their courses have helped to build confidence among learners and improved the quality of delivery for those working in the health and social care industry. They emphasised that, because of Multiply, the self-reported confidence levels of learners have risen, and the number of medical errors reported by the employer organisations that they worked with on the scheme has reduced.
- **Northern Learning Trust** also felt that they were successful in their delivery on Multiply. They felt that this was because they had lots of experience engaging the hardest to reach learners on previous schemes. They emphasised that, due to their experienced staff and established presence in the community, they were able to scale up operations rapidly. This experience allowed them to deliver a year’s worth of delivery in the first 6-months of the scheme.

“We came into this contract with a lot of experience of engaging the hardest to reach and people with the lowest level of skills...this is the purpose of our organisation; we were set up to do that and succeed on the scheme.” - *Northern Learning Trust stakeholder*

8.6.2.Satisfaction with delivery and contents

Stakeholders were largely satisfied with the course delivery as part of the Multiply programme. Factors which contributed to this include:

A focus on building learner confidence

The courses delivered were more around building the confidence of learners with their maths rather than focused on developing direct functional skills (level 1 and level 2 qualifications)

Engaging and practical content

Local areas and providers both highlighted the importance of “hiding the maths” within the courses delivered as part of Multiply. This was done in numerous ways within the North East CA, including through cooking courses, DIY courses, courses focused on budgeting or saving money tips, etc.

Flexibility in delivery and learner provision

Due to the flexibility of Multiply, North East CA and the other organisations were able to focus directly on the needs of the learner rather than on how to get a learner through a more rigid qualification framework.

Innovation in delivery

The level of innovation that existed within the Multiply courses was highly praised, with the use of bespoke courses, taster sessions, and short courses that allowed North East CA and their local areas / providers to deliver in a more creative way than on other adult education programmes. Stakeholders involved in the delivery of these courses have found them to be “very refreshing” and impactful for learners.

Opportunities to upskill delivery staff within North East CA and local areas

The flexibility of Multiply funding allowed stakeholders to upskill staff. For example, Northern Learning Trust stated that they had previously found it difficult to recruit good staff. But through the increased funding provided by Multiply, they have had increased security to allow three members of staff begin teacher training qualifications, as advanced

apprentices. They also mentioned the added benefit that these individuals now stand a better chance to be employed elsewhere, post-Multiply.

"It's hard to recruit, there are skills gaps. What we've done through Multiply is home grow some people. So we've got three members of staff who are going through the teacher training qualification as advanced apprentices. We've been able to develop these three members of staff solely through Multiply which is absolutely wonderful." - *Northern Learning Trust stakeholder*

However, there were a few elements of course delivery that stakeholders felt were more challenging.

Learner no-shows

A few stakeholders mentioned that they experienced a high level of no-shows from learners which meant tutors' time was not always allocated as effectively as it could have been. Northumberland Council mentioned one specific example where they had planned a three-week course for learners but only had five learners show up. This led to increased costs for the Council as they had employed a full-time lecturer for the course.

Employer engagement

As mentioned previously, local areas and providers also described facing certain challenges when dealing with employers during course delivery. For example, Northumberland Council emphasised that when trying to engage employers they tried using practical examples to market Multiply, as they had offered out-of-office-hours learning, made teaching and learning more focused to the specific employer organisation they were targeting; and used workshops to promote Multiply. However, despite these efforts they still reported that they were largely unsuccessful when trying to engage employers.

Lack of tutor resource

Some stakeholders identified tutor staffing as a challenge in Multiply delivery, particularly due to the high need for one-to-one learner support, which required more tutors than typical adult education programmes. Northumberland Council also noted difficulties with tutor travel across their large geographic area, which further complicated delivery.

8.7. Outcomes and impact

8.7.1. North East CA's views

Stakeholders from the North East CA felt that the Multiply programme met the key objectives of the region. They highlighted that they felt the programme reached a broad community of learners and achieved good quality engagement from community organisations. The leads also stated that while some local areas faced initial delivery challenges in the first year of the programme and missed delivery targets (which led to a small amount of under-spending across the Combined Authority in year one), these local areas were able to reach their targets in subsequent years of the scheme. **The North East CA were also very positive about the impact of Multiply helping them strengthen their provider base** where they are now delivering interventions as a more cohesive group within the region, where delivery is more consistent, and more impactful.

Beyond this, the delivery lead from North East CA regularly underlined the **positive impact of the programme on increasing the confidence of learners and anecdotally reported increased engagement for some learners in further college provision.** However, despite this anecdotal evidence, stakeholders from the North East CA highlighted that they did not have enough direct data on the further take up of functional skills courses from learners post-Multiply. They stated that while it would be interesting to see if there was an increase in the take up of these courses post-Multiply, they will not have the same amount of contact with their provider base after the funding ends to get high quality information on this.

“People feel more confident in themselves and are able to do other things, not just necessarily go for functional maths qualifications, such as volunteering, getting more involved in the children's school, go for promotions which they weren't doing before.” - *NECA stakeholder*

8.7.2. Local areas' views

All three local areas reported experiencing positive outcomes as part of the programme. Some local areas described facing initial challenges with getting started on the programme (primarily centred around engaging with employers, how to market Multiply courses to different learners, and the types of courses that would be most effective in Multiply). **However, after adjusted delivery, the local areas all reported that they were able to reach their delivery targets after Year 1.**

Stakeholders from local areas provided largely anecdotal evidence of impacts. One stakeholder from Newcastle Council described that this was because as part of the programme they did not consistently track what the learners did at the end of the

programme - and did not reach out directly to learners post-programme. They felt that Multiply was a softer-skills oriented programme, which made it harder to track tangible direct outcomes, compared to courses with a qualification. Despite this, LA stakeholders praised the confidence learners gained from Multiply and emphasised that this was a very important impact even if the learners did not move on to further programmes. **LA level stakeholders also stated that Multiply functioned as a bridge towards functional skills and higher-level maths for people who would not initially engage in any form of a course.** This was mentioned directly by both Curriculum Leads in North Tyneside and Northumberland. These stakeholders described that there has been lots of cross-over between courses and individuals progressing through courses.

“We are engaging people and then they're staying in learning which is really positive. But what wider impact that has in the longer term is yet to be seen as well. And I think that's one of the difficult things we can get anecdotal evidence of people feeling more confident or people feeling better in terms of budgeting, but we can't demonstrate that people are budgeting better, we can't directly demonstrate that they are more confident with numeracy.” - *North Tyneside Council stakeholder*

8.7.3. Views of providers

Across the three provider organisations interviewed, they all reported witnessing positive outcomes as part of the Multiply programme. All three organisations stated that they exceeded progress targets as part of their delivery. For example, Thriving Together Northumberland had a year two target of reaching 376 learners, but they overachieved in reaching 394. In year two, Winnovation also exceeded targets and reached their goal of delivering to 100 learners by January, which allowed them to take on another 20 learners to close out the financial year. All three providers emphasised that the demand from learners remained consistent throughout the three years of Multiply delivery.

In terms of further outcomes, **Winnovation stressed that the main impact from the delivery of their courses was having built confidence amongst learners.** They reported that learner self-assessment at the end of the course found that 95% of learners felt they had increased their confidence with numeracy. The provider also reported that the quality of work conducted by learners in health and social care professions had improved and led to medical errors dropping for the employers that they are engaged with. For example, at a care home that was engaged by Winnovation as part of their delivery on Multiply, medication errors have dropped from 164 errors per quarter before the course to 48 errors per quarter after.

Winnovation reported positive outcomes in terms of learners moving onto further courses or education after Multiply. They tracked the progression of learners onto further courses by providing 6-month post-course support, which involved calling the learner to find out what they were doing and sharing the details of other providers or other courses that they were delivering. The provider found that in year one, around 70% of learners went into another course or further education. This number was reported to be higher in year two and they hoped that it would be even higher in year three.

Thriving Together Northumberland also described the impact of improved employability outcomes for learners because of Multiply. They stated that some of the learners that they engaged were able to progress in their job roles through the increased capability and confidence that they developed on Multiply courses.

Case study provided by Thriving Together Northumberland

To illustrate learner progression, we can look at Ali's journey through Multiply as a prime example. Ali, a participant in our numeracy course, was initially employed as a retail assistant. He enrolled for the course because of the flexibility and one-to-one support we offer our learners. Through our partnership with local organisations, Ali was referred and encouraged to enhance his skill set, particularly in areas directly relevant to his job role and future aspirations.

The numeracy course equipped Ali with fundamental skills, such as understanding and analysing data, performing calculations, and managing time efficiently. These skills were crucial for his day-to-day responsibilities in retail, like handling cash, managing stock levels, and interacting with customers. However, Ali's ambition extended beyond his current role, and he sought opportunities to grow professionally.

With Multiply's numeracy course, Ali's confidence and capabilities in handling numerical and logistical tasks significantly improved. He demonstrated a newfound proficiency in managing inventory, accurately interpreting sales and stock data, and optimising the store's goods flow. These skills improved his performance in his existing role and positioned him as a strong candidate for career advancement.

Ali's employer recognised his enhanced abilities and supported him in enrolling in the apprentice programme for better career opportunities. Ali has utilised his improved numeracy skills to coordinate logistics more efficiently, manage inventory accurately, and contribute to optimising supply chain operations. His progression from a retail assistant to exploring better personal and professional development demonstrated the tangible impact of targeted learning interventions.

8.8. Future plans

In discussions about future plans post-Multiply, the North East CA emphasised that they were still a new combined authority, created in May 2024, and were still in the process of creating a skills strategy under the new Mayor. As such, the Multiply lead within the CA felt that they could not make any firm plans going forward until they were given a clearer strategic direction.

"It's all a little bit up in the air, and that's because we're now in a new combined authority, with a new mayor, and a new Cabinet." - *NECA stakeholder*

Stakeholders from the **local areas also highlighted that future planning was difficult during this period because they did not know what the landscape would look like at the North East CA level going forward.** Various LA-level stakeholders were bidding quite regularly for funding for schemes post-Multiply funding ending. Northumberland Council stakeholders also mentioned their desire to embed numeracy further in ESOL courses as they felt this was an area that would be beneficial for their local residents.

However, LA stakeholders also illustrated some areas for concern post-Multiply funding ending. For example, the delivery team at North Tyneside highlighted that **post-Multiply some staff are leaving** (and that one of their tutors has already left) which might mean they will have a shortage of staff if another funding stream is created. There are some **worries amongst local areas that they will not be able to reach the same communities that they have been engaging on Multiply** with the adult-skills budget. These stakeholders felt that if funding was to be fully removed, it would become more difficult to implement any learnings from Multiply.

9. Appendix

Appendix A: Selection criteria for local area case studies

Table 5: Selection criteria for case studies

Criteria	Criteria breakdown
Level of administration	Local Area / MSA
Intervention type	A - J
Intervention innovation	Innovation / Limited innovation
Delivery progress / performance	Good / Poor
Geographic region	North East / North West / South East / South West / East Midlands / West Midlands
Community type	Rural / Urban
Allocation size	Small (£1m-£5m) / Medium (£5m-£10m) / Large (£10m+)
New learner spread	Range
Whether deliver AEB	Delivers AEB / Does not deliver AEB

Appendix B: Sampling

Verian collaborated with DfE to select local areas based on a method of purposive sampling using a range of criteria to ensure a spread of different types of local areas. This included: the level of administration (i.e. combined authority, local authority); size of funding allocation; geographic region; intervention types; and, whether they deliver Adult Education Budget (AEB) provision. A more detailed breakdown of these criteria can be seen in Appendix A.

Over the first and second waves of fieldwork, Verian carried out case study research with 20 local areas. These are listed in Table 7 below.

Table 6: List of local areas included in wave 1 and wave 2

Wave 1 fieldwork (June – Nov 2023)	Wave 2 fieldwork (Aug 2024 – Feb 2025)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essex • Greater Manchester • Lancashire • Staffordshire • West Midlands • West Yorkshire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackpool • Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority • Cheshire West • Cornwall* • Derby* • Greater London Authority* • Gloucestershire* • Lincolnshire • Liverpool* • Luton • North East Combined Authority (North East CA)* • Oxfordshire • Somerset • West of England Combined Authority (WECA)

Please note that local areas with a * are those which have been written up in full in this report.

Not all of these case studies are written up in full in this report, but insights from all of these case studies shape the overall arguments and insights presented here. The local areas with an asterisk (*) next to their name are included in this report as full case study write-ups. These case study areas were selected because they provide a valuable picture

on the range of different delivery models, contexts, experiences, and impacts that were reported by local areas across the Multiply programme.

Appendix C: Fieldwork overview for Wave 2 and Wave 1 case studies

Across local areas, case study interviews tended to be composed of interviews or small groups with:

- 1 - 2 strategic leads (e.g. Heads of Adult Education, Multiply Leads or Programme Managers, Adult Learning & Skills Managers, Heads of Skills).
- 3 - 5 local area delivery leads (e.g. Multiply Delivery Leads, Communications Leads, Senior Officers in Curriculum Development and Delivery, Audit & Compliance Officers, Economic Advisors).
- 3 - 5 provider organisations (e.g. Delivery Partners, Employers, Practitioners and mentors).

Table 7: Fieldwork overview

Wave	Location	Interview timings	Total interviews
Wave 2 research (Aug 2024 – Feb 2025)	Cornwall	23 rd Oct – 8 th Nov 2024	7
	Derby	10 th Sep – 19 th Nov 2024	9
	GLA	30 th Aug – 26 th Nov 2024	9
	Gloucestershire	20 th Aug – 28 th Oct 2024	8
	Liverpool	23 rd Oct -17 th Nov 2024	8
	North East Combined Authority	20 th Nov - 10 th Dec 2024	8
	Blackpool	31 st Jan – 26 th Feb 2025	6
	Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority	11 th Nov – 10 th Dec 2024	3
	Cheshire West	10 th Sep - 24 th Oct 2024	6
	Lincolnshire	23 rd Aug 2024 – 14 th Jan 2025	5
	Luton	10 th Sep – 15 th Nov 2024	6
	Somerset	11 th Sep – 12 th Dec 2024	9
	Oxfordshire	11 th Sep – 25 th Nov 2024	6
	West of England Combined Authority	11 th Sep – 14 th Nov 2024	6
Wave 1 research (June 2023 – Nov 2023)	Lancashire	21 st Jun – 14 th Jul 2023	8
	Essex	30 th Jun – 18 th Oct 2023	9
	Greater Manchester	10 th Jul – 26 th Jul 2023	9
	Staffordshire	14 th Jun – 3 rd Aug 2023	7
	West Midlands	19 th Jul – 2 nd Nov 2023	9
	West Yorkshire	8 th Aug – 25 th Sep 2023	5

Appendix D: Topic guide used with local area case study leads

Case Study interviews: Multiply leads

Topic Guide for use with Case Study Leads

Background

To boost existing efforts to address low levels of adult numeracy, the UK Government has committed that the first priority of the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) will be the Multiply adult numeracy programme. The aim of Multiply is to support adults with low levels of numeracy to improve their skills up to at least a Level 2 (GCSE grade 4/C) level. Multiply builds on and complements existing provision by creating new offerings, with a focus on courses that meet local needs for flexibility, intensity and method of delivery. The delivery of the programme involves a range of partners and stakeholders, including local authorities, mayoral combined authorities (MCAs), providers, employers and individual learners. Local Areas play a significant role by specifying local needs in their Multiply Investment Plans and coordinating the delivery of course in their areas.

Research aims

The aim of the case study analysis is to build an in-depth view into the programme delivery at a local level. The interviews will seek to draw out insights at a strategic level such as how the programme helps achieve the overarching ambitions/objectives of the Local Area as well as operational-level learnings on programme delivery. This will include information on how Local Areas are spending Multiply funding and how they have assessed value for money of this spend (especially non-classroom approaches), and how they are avoiding duplication with local AEB spend.

This guide has been designed specifically for interviews with the case study leads. The objective of this interview is to deliver insight into the strategic objectives of the programme in the local context, explore programme delivery at an overarching level, to identify any learnings and insights for future rounds as well as any additional support needs required in the future. The interview will also be used to confirm other key stakeholders on the Multiply delivery team who can/should be interviewed as part of the case study exercise.

Note to moderators

Please note, this guide is not a script and is intended to be used flexibly, with participant responses guiding the flow of the conversation, topics covered in the order that they naturally arise, and probes used only when needed.

This discussion guide has been designed to answer the key questions of the study in the time available. The guide is written to have some key ‘lead’ questions that each open up a particular subject area generally and allow a person to respond to this spontaneously, only probing on specific points when they do not come up organically. This means there are not specific questions on every point of interest, but each will be captured via moderator probing and follow ups.

The discussion guide is formatted to clearly signpost questions and audience differences as follows:

- Lead questions in **BOLD** – all lead questions should be asked to all respondents unless answered spontaneously elsewhere in the guide.
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- While not stated explicitly in all places, **the researcher will probe to better understand the participant’s responses regarding HOW and WHY as appropriate / when not already explained by the participant.**

Recruitment validation: During fieldwork, the moderator must confirm recruitment criteria of participants. Any discrepancies must be logged in the validation tab of the profile sheet and the moderator must notify the Project Director.

Data validation: Note that 5% of recordings/transcripts will be validated by an independent person and therefore any interview or group may be monitored.

Key contacts

List project lead details and key client names.

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1. Introduction (2 minutes)

Introduce research, reassure about confidentiality, and set tone of discussion.

- **Warm up and introduction**

- Introduce moderator and Verian.
 - **FREELANCERS:** introduce yourselves as ‘working **on behalf of Verian**’ (not ‘from Verian’)
- Research on behalf of the Department of Education
- Aim of the discussion is to capture insights relating to the strategic objectives of Multiply, programme delivery and outcomes/impacts of the programme.
- This information will be used to –
 - Understand how Multiply funding works alongside AEB funded provision and how Value for Money (VfM) is assessed and monitored.
 - Summarise the enablers of success as well as the barriers to delivery (specific to Year 2 of delivery) and any lessons learned, to feed into the evidence base and to inform delivery and future interventions.
 - Identify any examples of innovative and/or impactful approaches to delivery. For the purposes of this research, innovation is defined as either where a local delivery team has tried something different to what they were doing in the past; or a local delivery team has implemented a novel approach that is completely different to what other areas are doing.
 - Confirm the other Multiply delivery team stakeholders to be interviewed.
- Interview length – 1 hour.
- Research is confidential and voluntary – your personal details will not be shared with DfE and participation will not affect your current or future relationship with DfE.
- [If any observers – must be alerted during recruitment] confirm participants are aware and agree to this.
- Thank you leaflet – check if received beforehand (in appointment confirmation email), else email after interview.
- Verian’s privacy policy can be accessed on our website: <https://www.veriangroup.com/uk-surveys>
- Any questions?

- **Recording**

Ask participant for permission to record, then start recording and confirm consent [Note: Verian shall ensure that recordings of groups or depth interviews are only conducted with consent and only used for the purposes for which the consent was given.]

2. Contextual Background (5 minutes)

Provide a background into the respondent's experience and the structure of the Multiply delivery team within the Local Area.

- **Can you give me a brief overview of your role in [X department]?**
 - Probe: responsibilities linked to adult learning

- **Please talk me through your role related to Multiply in [X area]?**
 - Scope of their role and responsibilities
 - Has this evolved/changed in any way since the programme was launched?
 - What changed and why?

- **Can you please describe the Multiply delivery team structure? Who are the key stakeholders and what are their responsibilities? Has anything changed since delivery in Year 1? If yes, why?**
 - Core stakeholder group
 - Wider delivery team
 - Working groups
 - External partners
 - Probe on the following:
 - Academics
 - Community engagement organisations
 - Local politicians (Members and/or Mayors), etc

3. Strategic Objectives of Multiply (15 minutes)

Understand the strategic objectives of the Multiply programme for the Local Area.

- **What are your key objectives for the Multiply programme as a whole? What are you aiming to achieve? Has there been any change in objectives since Year 1?**
 - What does success look like?
 - What are the outcomes and impacts you expect it to achieve?
 - Probe: specific outcomes/impacts for different target audience groups

- **Could you please give me a brief overview of the Multiply interventions you are implementing in (X Area) in Year 2?**
 - Why did you choose to implement these interventions in X Area?
 - Are there any differences in the implementation of these interventions within X Area? If so, why?
 - How will these interventions lead to the outcomes/impacts you mentioned above?
 - Have the interventions you are offering changed at all between year 1 and year 2?
 - If interventions have changed: How have the interventions changes? What was the reason behind these changes?

- **How does Multiply align with other adult learning and employability programmes in your area? Probe specifically on AEB.**
 - Are there any overlaps between Multiply and the programmes mentioned?
 - Probe more widely on adult skills and employability programmes in the area, e.g., Apprenticeships, Sector-Based Work Academies, Restart?
 - How does Multiply add value in the existing adult skills and employability landscape?

- **How does the design of the Multiply programme align with the wider strategic objectives for the area? Have there been any shifts in priorities since the programme was launched?**
 - Does Multiply contribute to the achievement of these objectives? Why/Why not?
 - If yes, then how does it contribute to the achievement of these objectives?
 - How does it align with the Local Skills Improvement Plan? (LSIP)
 - Is it a priority programme for internal stakeholders?
 - If there has been a shift in priorities: Why was there in a shift in priorities since the programme was launched?

4. Programme Delivery (20 minutes)

Explore the experience of delivery from the perspective of the Local Area lead.

4.1 Stakeholder engagement

- **How are you communicating with internal stakeholders (within the Local Area) and securing buy-in on Multiply?**
 - Has there been any pushback from within the Local Area to Multiply? Has Multiply been involved in prioritisation decisions?
 - How effective are the various activities/techniques adopted by the Local Area? How are you bringing political leaders on board with the Multiply offer?
 - Do you have any specific examples of communication/engagement with stakeholders?

- **Who have you engaged inside and outside of your organisation in order to deliver Multiply ? (e.g. partners, local businesses, providers, community organisations)**
 - What value did the different partners/local businesses / providers / community organisations bring to [X area's] delivery of Multiply? How do you continue to keep partners engaged? What was successful? What was not?
 - Were engagement activities in Year 2 different from Year 1?

- Did you engage with employers in Yr 2 of Multiply? If so:
 - What was easy about working with employers? Why?
 - What was challenging about engaging with employers?
 - Was it different from year 1?
 - Did you engage with employers on any other government funded education programmes? If so, how did this compare with your engagement on Multiply?

- Did you face any challenges in this? How did you manage them?

4.2 Overall experience of delivery

- **What has your experience of delivering Multiply in Year 2 been?**
- What were the key factors that impacted your experience? How, if at all, is it different from Year 1?

- **What learnings have you already gathered from year 1 and implemented in year 2? Why?**
 - What, if anything, has changed in your delivery approach from year 1 to year 2?
 - Probe on the following:
 - Delivery team structure
 - Roles
 - Interventions
 - Approaches
 - Stakeholder and learner engagement

- **What have been the key barriers that you and your team have experienced in the delivery of Multiply in Year 2? Did these barriers differ between year 1 and year 2?**
 - Probe on the following:
 - Team staffing and recruitment
 - Partner engagement
 - Local business engagement
 - Target audience reach / engagement
 - Duplication with AEB funding
 - Identification of the right suppliers/course providers
 - Programme communication
 - Learner progression
 - Programme management and governance processes
 - Tracking and monitoring
 - Geographical barriers (e.g. rurality of the region)
 - Local demographic context of the region (e.g. make-up of working age population, age of population generally)

- **What, in your view, went well in Year 2? What are the key factors that drove this?**
 - Probe on the following:
 - Partnership working and communication
 - Identifying numeracy needs
 - Increasing awareness of Multiply
 - Work with employer groups/employer engagement
 - Engaging learners, attracting new learner groups
 - Knowledge sharing between local authorities
 - Interactions with central government
 - Increased opportunities for innovation
 - Using response to what went well: What do you think the impact of this has been / what will the impact be?

- **Are there any examples of innovative/successful approaches to delivery in X area that you can think of? What are they? Why was this innovative?**
 - Probe specifically for:
 - Employer engagement and co-design

- Incentives based approaches
 - Interventions for those out of work, prisoners, those leaving the prison system and care leavers
 - Community outreach and delivery
 - Engaging learners (including comms approaches)
 - Tutoring focused interventions
 - Homework focused interventions
 - Digital approaches
 - Progression of learners
- **Are you satisfied with how the programme is being managed at the central level?**
 - Why/Why not?
 - What's working well and what isn't?

5. Programme Tracking and Monitoring (5 minutes)

Understand the actions taken by the Local Area to track and monitor the delivery of Multiply.

- **What mechanisms are in place for tracking the outcomes and impacts? Has this been happening as planned?**
 - How effective are these mechanisms in place for tracking the outcomes and impacts?
 - What sources of data are used for tracking?
 - Are you planning to do any evaluations of the programme at the local level?
 - Are there any sources of data that you would like to track but are not currently doing so?
 - Do you know if partner organisations collect data of delivery?
- **Have there been any changes in programme tracking and monitoring between year 1 and year 2?**
 - If so, what was the reason behind these changes?
- **Is tracking and monitoring information used? If yes, how?**
 - Is this information shared with other stakeholders internally or with other delivery partners? If so, what is their perspective on this tracking and monitoring information?

- **Are you meeting the demand in your area with the number of staff you have? And, if so, how?**
 - Have you experienced any challenges with staff retention/staff turnover?

- **What does demand for courses from learners look like? How are you managing demand?**
 - How do you know what the demand is for courses from learners in your Local Area?
 - How do you know if the demand is being met for courses from learners?
 - Has demand for courses changed during the Multiply programme?
 - How does demand for Multiply in Year 2 compare to Multiply in Year 1? And to other AEB courses?

6. Outcomes and Impacts (5 minutes)

Explore the outcomes emerging from the Multiply programme in the Local Area.

- **What key outcomes is Multiply delivering? What is driving this?**
 - How do these outcomes compare to what was expected?
 - What metrics/data are these outcomes based off of?

- **What about any unintended consequences as a result of Multiply?**

- **Do you have any examples of success stories in terms of what has worked well?**
 - For example, probe on:
 - Impact on improving adult numeracy?
 - Impact on improving learner confidence with numeracy?
 - Impact on improving job prospects for adult learners?
 - Impact on return to work or progression within work?
 - Impact on engaging target groups?

- **What are the outcomes you expect to see from Multiply over the longer term? Has your perspective on this changed over year 1 and 2?**

- If perspective has changed, why?
- **Do you think Multiply is achieving its objectives set by the Local Area? Why/why not?**

7. Future Plans (5 minutes)

Understand the future plans of the delivery lead for Multiply and math provision more generally.

- **What are the plans for when the funding period ends?**
 - Is there a desire to continue these initiatives?
 - If so, how will they be funded? Are there any plans being put in place currently for this?
 - What evidence does [X Area] have, or expect to have, to support these plans?
- **Are there any plans to embed the practices or approaches developed for Multiply into future delivery for other programmes?**
 - If so, what practices and what programmes? Under what funding?

8. Overall Views and Close (3 minutes)

Gather insight on the overall perspective of respondents to the Multiply programme and close the interview.

- **What are your views on the Multiply programme at an overall level?**
- **Any final thoughts**
- **Thanks and close**

Post-field work admin:

- Upload audio recording to secure project folder, labelled as follows: JN_PROJECT NAME # [respondent number] AND TYPE_RESEARCHER INITIALS_DATE
- Complete analysis chart and save in secure project folder.

Appendix E: Topic guide with local area case study delivery stakeholders

Case Study interviews: Delivery teams

Topic Guide for use with: Intervention, Project Management, Commercial, Communication/Marketing leads

Background

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Research aims

The aim of the case study analysis is to build an in-depth view into the different dimensions of programme delivery at the local level.

This guide has been designed specifically for interviews with key delivery stakeholders from the case study area. The objective of this interview is to deliver insight into the experience of programme delivery from different roles and perspectives, to identify any learnings and insights for future rounds as well as any additional support needs required in the future.

We will carry out 1-hour semi-structured interviews with Multiply stakeholders in the selected case study area working across:

- **Intervention / Strategy Leadership**
- **Project Management**
- **Communication/ Marketing**
- **Finance and assurance**
- **Commissioning and provider management**

We will also discuss programme tracking and monitoring; outcomes and impacts; and programme sustainability and future plans.

Please note that some Local Areas may have only one or two people responsible for all of these roles, whereas others may have larger teams with more defined roles. This guide should be used very flexibly. We have indicated the primary roles who can answer each set of questions, but the moderator will need to flex the approach based on their specific roles and responsibilities.

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 - Confirm the other Multiply delivery team stakeholders to be interviewed.
- Interview length – 1 hour.
- Research is confidential and voluntary – your personal details will not be shared with DfE and participation will not affect your current or future relationship with DfE.

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2. Contextual Background (5 minutes)

Provide a background into the respondent’s experience and the structure of the Multiply delivery team within the Local Area.

- **Can you give me a brief overview of your role in [X department]?**
 - Probe: responsibilities linked to adult learning

- **Please talk me through your role related to Multiply in [X area]?**
 - Scope of their role and responsibilities
 - Has this evolved/changed in any way since the programme was launched?
 - What changed and why?

- **Can you please describe the Multiply delivery team structure? Were there any changes to the structure of the team in Year 2, and if so, why?**
 - Core stakeholder group
 - Wider delivery team
 - Any external partners?

3. Overall Delivery Experience (10 minutes)

Understand the overall delivery experience of the Multiply programme for the delivery stakeholder.

- **What was your overall experience of delivering Multiply in Year 2?**
 - What were the key factors that impacted your experience of Multiply delivery?

- **What is your understanding of what was achieved in Year 2 of delivery?**
 - What were the key factors that impacted the success of delivery?

- **What learnings from Year 1 were implemented in Year 2? Why?**
 - What, if anything, changed in your delivery approach from Year 1 to Year 2?
 - Probe on the following:
 - Delivery team structure
 - Roles
 - Interventions
 - Approaches

- **What were the key barriers that you and your team experienced in Year 2 of Multiply delivery? Did these barriers differ in any way from Year 1?**

4. Experience of Multiply Delivery (20 minutes)

Explore the experience of delivery from the perspective of the delivery stakeholders in the Local Area.

4.1. Intervention leads

- **What are the specific processes involved in delivery [X intervention]?**
 - Partner/Provider engagement
 - Probe: How is data collection and reporting with providers going?
 - Are there any issues? If so, what and how are you managing it?
 - Target group engagement and communication
 - Probe: How are learners identified and engaged?
 - What data sources did you consult?
 - Which partners did you consult?
 - Any marketing funnel exercises conducted?
 - Specific activities/initiatives for hard-to-reach groups
 - Progress tracking

- Probe: are you aiming to progress learners towards qualifications?
- How important is progress towards qualifications in your strategy?
- How are you encouraging progression?
- Are there any examples of innovative approaches to delivery? What are they? Why was this innovative / different?
- Moderator note: We have agreed with DfE that the definition of innovation in this context is either where a local delivery team has tried something different to what they were doing in the past or a local delivery team has implemented a novel approach that is completely different to what other areas are doing.
- Are there any examples of impactful approaches to delivery? What are they? Why was this impactful?

Moderator note: We have agreed with DfE that impactful examples are those where an initiative by the local delivery team has: had a strong impact in terms of learner engagement, learning outcomes or learning progression; where it has had a strong impact on stakeholder/employer engagement; or where it has achieved an aim or solved a problem. Any others?

- **What has been your experience of delivery [X intervention]?**

- Whether delivery expectations are being met? Was there anything different / unexpected in the delivery of this intervention?
- What is going well? Why?
- What are the barriers / challenges faced? Why?
- How challenges are being addressed
- Lessons learnt

4.2. Project management

- **What are the key roles and processes for managing the programme?**

- Resourcing – who is involved and how often?
- Any regular meetings set up: frequency, who attends, scope of the discussion.
- Software/tools – what tools/software are used to track programme delivery?
- Communication – how does information flow between various teams and the project management team?

- **How are you communicating with stakeholders on Multiply?**

- How effective are the various activities/techniques adopted by the Local Area?
- Do you have any specific examples of communication/engagement with stakeholders?

- **Which partners are you engaging with to delivery Multiply? Have you worked with different partners in Year 2 compared to Year 1?**
 - Why are you engaging with these partners?
 - If changes made, why did you make changes?
 - What has worked well and what are the challenges?

- **How do you drive/support alignment between different internal delivery teams on Multiply? How do you continue to keep them engaged?**
 - How do you enable smooth working between different departments?
 - What's working well and where are the barriers?
 - What have been the key learnings and what would you do differently?

- **Do you have the right staff to deliver Multiply? (at X Local Area and in terms of providers)**
 - Why/Why not?
 - If not, where are their gaps in the staff (both in terms of capacity/resource and the capability of the staff)?
 - Are you doing anything to fill these gaps?

- **How do you effectively manage external partners/providers?**
 - Do you have any examples of best practices?
 - How often do you communicate with external partners? Do formalised channels of communication exist?
 - What opportunities are in place for providers to share best practice and identify appropriate progression routes for learners?

4.3. Communications and Marketing

- **Which audiences are you engaging with to deliver Multiply? (e.g., businesses, learners, providers)**
 - Has the approach to communicating with them changed in Year 2 from Year 1?
 - Any new groups being engaged in Year 2?

- **What is your communications strategy?**
 - Do you engage with providers to deliver your communications strategy? If yes:
 - What activities are being carried out by providers?

- What is the effectiveness of these activities? (probe specifically on how providers encourage learners to participate in formal, substantive learning) Do you engage with employers through your communication strategy? If yes:
 - How do you encourage them to access tailored Multiply learning for their staff?
 - How do you work with employers to signpost the existence of Multiply learning opportunities?
 - What has worked well/could be improved in this process?
- **What are the key initiatives carried out to raise awareness of Multiply locally in Year 2?**
 - Why were these initiatives carried out? What evidence was used to make these decisions?
 - Do you have any evidence on the success of these initiatives?
 - Has anything changed in the initiatives carried out since the first year of delivery?
 - **Please can you provide an example of some recent communications being sent out to learners/employers/any other audiences you are engaging?**
 - This can include awareness raising material shared by providers.
 - **Is the effectiveness of communication initiatives being tracked? How?**
 - If yes, what do these tracking measures show?
 - Are any forms of technology being used for tracking?
 - **How satisfied are you with the impact the communication initiatives are having?**
 - If satisfied: what specific elements of the communication are you satisfied with? Why are you satisfied with this? What did it achieve?
 - If not satisfied: why?

4.4. Finance and assurance

- **How do you ensure Multiply spending occurs within the terms of the Grant Agreement?**
 - What is the process followed – How do you commission Multiply activities, e.g., through a grant or a contract?
 - Which documents/templates are used?
 - Tracking and reporting – how often is this done and who does it?

- Have you come across any grey areas where it's unclear whether a spend qualifies for Multiply funding? How did you decide what to do?
- What payment and reconciliation arrangements do you have in place? Including timing of payments as well as the basis for them, e.g., what payment model is utilised?
- **How do you think Multiply is currently delivering in terms of Value for Money?**
 - Why? Could this be improved? If so, how?
 - Is this meeting your objectives?
 - If Multiply is not delivering in terms of VfM now, do you think it will in the future?
- **How are the programme financials tracked? What are the parameters that you track to ensure that the programme is being delivered in a cost effective way?**
 - E.g. processes followed, templates used, technology used, decision-making and sign-off process

4.5. Commissioning and Provider Management

- **How was Multiply provision in X Local Area commissioned?**
 - What criterion have you used to assess Multiply providers?
 - What has worked well, and what have the challenges been?
- **What have been the key barriers/enablers to commissioning Multiply delivery providers?**
 - Who was involved in this process?
 - Do you have any examples of successful/unsuccessful strategies used to engage providers? Are there any Multiply specific barriers/enablers to procurement?
 - Could these barriers be overcome with DfE changes?
- **What have suppliers reporting arrangements looked like? What lessons have you learnt from this (particularly financial/commercial)?**
 - What channels are used for the reporting?
 - For reporting on delivery progress, what reports are produced? How often?

- **From a financial perspective how are you ensuring monitoring and assurance of suppliers?**
 - Has auditing been completed of these suppliers? If so, when and how?

4.6. Other

- **Are there initiatives to help identify progression routes for learners once they have improved numeracy skills?**
 - Are learners actively fed into further numeracy/AEB courses after completion of Multiply?
 - If not, why?
- **How do you ensure that Multiply funding does not duplicate or displace other government funded adult skills and employability programmes?**
 - Are there any overlaps between Multiply and other programmes?

5. Programme Tracking and Monitoring (5 minutes)

Understand the actions taken by the Local Area to track and monitor the delivery of Multiply.

- **What mechanisms are in place for tracking the outcomes and impacts? Has this been happening as planned?**
 - How effective are these mechanisms in place for tracking the outcomes and impacts?
 - What sources of data are used for tracking?
 - Are you planning to do any evaluations of the programme at the local level?
 - Are there any sources of data that you would like to track but are not currently doing so?
 - Do you know if partner organisations collect data of delivery?
- **Have there been any changes in programme tracking and monitoring between Year 1 and Year 2?**
 - If so, what was the reason behind these changes?
- **Is tracking and monitoring information used? If yes, how?**

- Is this information shared with other stakeholders internally or with other delivery partners? If so, what is their perspective on this tracking and monitoring information?
- **Do you think Multiply will achieve its objectives? Why/why not?**
 - Has your view changed since the beginning of the programme?
- **Are you meeting the demand in your area with the number of staff you have? And, if so, how?**
 - Have you experienced any challenges with staff retention/staff turnover?
- **What does demand for courses from learners look like? How are you managing demand?**
 - Has demand for courses changed during the Multiply programme?
 - How does demand for Multiply compare to other AEB courses?

6. Outcomes and impacts (5 minutes)

Explore the outcomes emerging from the Multiply programme in the Local Area.

- **Are you aware of any outcomes? What is driving this?**
 - How do these outcomes compare to what was expected?
 - What metrics/data are these outcomes based on?
- **What about any unintended consequences as a result of Multiply?**
- **Do you have any examples of success stories in terms of what has worked well?**
 - For example, probe on:
 - Impact on improving adult numeracy?
 - Impact on improving learner confidence with numeracy?
 - Impact on progression of learners into further numeracy study?
 - Impact on improving job prospects for adult learners?
 - Impact on return to work or progression within work?
 - Impact on engaging target groups?

7. Programme Sustainability (5 minutes)

Understand the perspective of the delivery stakeholders in terms of the programme sustainability of Multiply.

- **Is there any good practice for the delivery of Multiply you think other areas/stakeholders could learn from? If so, what and why?**
 - What would be the best way to share these learnings?
 - Probe: which delivery channels?
 - How frequently should learnings be shared?
 - Have you implemented any of the practices you have adopted on Multiply to other programmes?
 - Do you have any concrete plans to implement practices going forward?

- **Is there anything from other programmes or projects you have worked on that would be useful for Multiply? If so, which programmes and why?**
 - If not, do you have any concrete plans to implement practices going forward?

- **Is there any support that you think DfE could provide to encourage shared learnings? If so, how?**
 - E.g., communication on best practices in other Local Areas, linking Local Areas facing similar delivery challenges to communicate/collaborate on solutions, use of conferences/meetings.

8. Future Plans (5 minutes)

Understand the future plans of the delivery lead for Multiply and math provision more generally.

- **What are the key learnings they have had so far on the programme that will shape delivery in the future years?**
 - What is the most important learning that you have taken from the delivery of the programme?
 - How does the strategy for future years compare to Year 1 and 2?
 - Probe on: communications, engagement, focus of the delivery?

- Do you think these key learnings could have been achieved without the experience of delivery on the Multiply programme?
- **Are there any plans to embed the practices or approaches developed for Multiply into future delivery for other programmes?**
 - If so, what practices and what programmes? How would these be funded?

9. Overall View and Close (3 minutes)

Gather insight on the overall perspective of respondents to the Multiply programme and close the interview.

- **What are your views on the Multiply programme at an overall level?**
- **Are there any documents you are able to share with us to support this research?**
Moderator to explain: We're interested in communications and marketing examples as well as financial assurance and evidence of monitoring / impact.
- **Any final thoughts**
- **Thanks and close**

Post-field work admin:

- Upload audio recording to secure project folder, labelled as follows: JN_PROJECT NAME # [respondent number] AND TYPE_RESEARCHER INITIALS_DATE
- Complete analysis chart and save in secure project folder.



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