

Response to the evaluation of the Adult Education Budget in the 2020-21 Academic Year

The Mayor welcomes the findings of the evaluation of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) for the 2020/21 Academic Year delivered by IFF Research. This evaluation highlights the Mayor's successful management of London's AEB in the first two years of its delegation to London.

In a period heavily affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Mayor has helped ensure financial certainty for providers that could not maintain expected levels of delivery following Public Health England mandated lockdowns. The Mayor's response to the pandemic was very well received by London's AEB providers overall, with many citing the support made available through the Covid-19 Response Fund as essential in supporting them to move skills provision online, enabling Londoners to continue learning.

The evaluation shows that London's skills providers are very positive about their relationship with their provider manager. This has been a new initiative set up by the Mayor following delegation to support skills providers to meet London's priorities. This is a step-change to the previous national approach with quarterly meetings and closer support.

Delegation has also enabled the Mayor to make changes to AEB policy and funding arrangements that are tailored to meeting London's skills needs.

Since the budget was delegated, the Mayor has fully funded an additional 15,760 learners in low-paid work by increasing the low wage eligibility threshold to the value of the London Living Wage.

In 2020/21, the Mayor also supported almost 1,000 unemployed or low wage Londoners to retrain and achieve a new qualification at Level 3 through a funding flexibility introduced by the Mayor. Other flexibilities introduced by the Mayor to support London's recovery have also been welcomed by providers and sector stakeholders.

These successes demonstrate the impact strong local skills leadership – working in partnership with providers, employers and Londoners – can have. In light of this evaluation, the Mayor is renewing his calls to Ministers for further and deeper skills devolution to London and other cities.