

What is the Multiply programme?

The Multiply Programme is the first priority of the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and is designed to boost existing efforts to address low levels of adult (19+) numeracy, up to and including Level 2. The Programme has up to £559 million in funding available. The overarching objectives for Multiply are to increase the levels of functional numeracy in the adult population across the UK and improve labour market outcomes, such as increased employment and higher wages.

The What Works Strand of the Multiply Programme

An important part of Multiply is the What Works strand, designed to strengthen the evidence base around what works in the successful delivery of adult numeracy programmes and to share this with practitioners, in order to inform local delivery and to increase positive outcomes.

The 'What Works' programme is split into three projects:

- A Systematic Review, which will improve our understanding of the target learner base, assess the effectiveness of adult numeracy approaches, and outline the wider impact of various adult numeracy policy interventions in the UK.
- A Programme Evaluation, which will assess the impact and value of the Multiply programme, understand how effectively those involved in Multiply think it is being delivered and could be improved, and summarise lessons learned and best practice
- A series of Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs) and Quasi-experimental trials, which will robustly test promising approaches to improving adult numeracy. **This part of the What Works strand is the focus of this tender.**

The Randomised Controlled Trials and Quasi-Experimental Trials

The majority of trials will be RCTs, which are the gold standard research design to establish causal relationships and identify what is and is not effective. The trials aim to:

- **fill existing and emerging evidence gaps.** This will include approaches that are widely used but where the evidence base for impact is patchy or contraindicated.
- **directly support Multiply local delivery and improve its effectiveness,** through providing an evidence base to underpin decisions around all aspects of the learner cycle. The trials undertaken in Year 2 of the Multiply programme will inform its delivery in Year 3, including supporting decisions around which interventions are most effective, which

communications messages and channels to use to encourage learner take up, and which approaches to learner support, teaching and content provision are the most effective.

- **support broader efforts to ensure the value for money of DfE spend in adult education**, by ensuring funding flows towards approaches underpinned by a good quality evidence base. Where it tests established practice, the RCT programme will help evaluate this spend and the extent to which it provides good value for money. The programme will also test promising approaches that may not currently be widely used with adult learners, identifying areas where spend could be focused instead.

The trials will be divided between two tranches, with up to 20 trials in Tranche 1 and up to 10 in Tranche 2. Trials in Tranche 1 will happen in England only.

What are you seeking to procure?

In this contract we want to procure:

- **Recruitment of local areas and providers (including MCAs and LAs)** to participate in the trials
- Working with local areas to identify whether trial interventions can be delivered through their existing delivery networks, and if so, **overseeing delivery agreements with local areas and their delivery partners**
- Where interventions cannot be delivered through local authorities' existing delivery networks, **overseeing the recruitment of new delivery partners to deliver the interventions**
- **Management of delivery partners**, including ensuring they set up trials in accordance with the trial protocols, deliver interventions to an appropriately high standard, and adhere to data collection requirements specified by the evaluation supplier
- **Ensuring delivery partners are trained** by the product development supplier in delivering the interventions, where necessary
- **Managing the distribution of funding** for the interventions to delivery partners delivering the trial interventions

The supplier will also be required to work alongside three other suppliers for the duration of the programme, all of whom will be commissioned separately. DfE will help facilitate collaboration between suppliers with a dedicated contract manager.

- A specialist evaluation supplier, who will be responsible for: the overall design of each trial and the development of trial protocols; the collection of data to measure the efficacy of the interventions, including primary research, from both learners and providers; undertaking an Implementation and Process Evaluation of each trial to collect data to assess how rigorously the trial protocols were implemented and to identify

any issues that may affect the fidelity of the trials and/or the security of the results; analysis of data for each trial and producing a peer reviewed report for each trial, plus an overview report for the programme as a whole.

- A specialist product development supplier, who will be responsible for the development and/or refinement of the products or approaches to be tested. The product development supplier will also be responsible for providing training on implementing the products and approaches, where this is deemed necessary by the managed services supplier and the evaluation supplier.
- A specialist pre/post numeracy test supplier, who will be responsible for developing instruments to collect data on learner numeracy levels before and after interventions are delivered, in trials where this is an outcome being measured. This will be developed by a specialist organisation, as for the Multiply programme evaluation, and shared with the RCT evaluation

DfE expect all suppliers to follow the guidelines on collaborative working that will be shared as part of the ITT.

How will the organisations delivering the interventions be funded?

The trial interventions will be delivered by various delivery partners, for example local authorities, FE colleges, adult community learning providers, the voluntary sector, and employers. The appointed supplier will work with local authorities to identify whether trial interventions can be delivered through their existing delivery networks, or whether new delivery partners need to be recruited. They will oversee delivery agreements with existing delivery partners or oversee the recruitment of new partners. The supplier will then manage the delivery partners to ensure setup of the interventions in accordance with the trial protocols and manage the distribution of funding to these partners.

Trials and Research

To give a broad idea of trial topics, below are a selection of illustrative examples we provided as part of the idea generation process:

- identify adults with potential numeracy issues, including working with employers, other public services, the voluntary sector etc and diagnosing learning difficulties such as dyscalculia
- engage with, motivate, and support people to take their first steps to improve their numeracy skills
- understand and address barriers to learning, including the use of flexible and

blended learning

- deliver curriculum content in a compelling and relevant way for adult learners, contextualised to different life scenarios and industries, including co-designing courses with employers and public sector partners
- test different pedagogical approaches to teaching adult numeracy
- encourage learners into additional education, employment, or training after their Multiply course

The results of trials will be fed back to local authorities, providers, and practitioners throughout the duration of the Multiply programme, so the evidence generated from them can be used to inform the design and enhancement of their provision.