

# **SKILLS BOOTCAMPS**

**W5** (Financial Year 2024-25) **Guidance** 

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#### **Background to Skills Bootcamps**

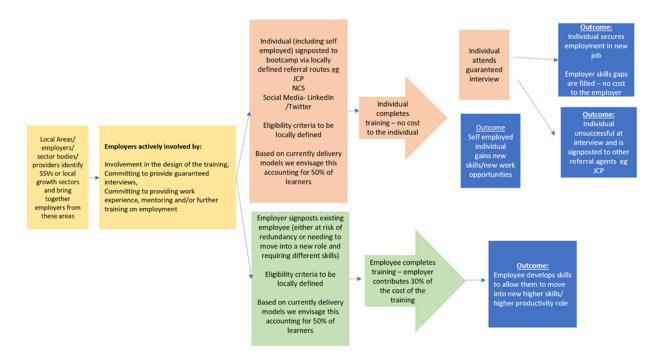
- a. Over the course of this Parliament, we are providing GBP 2.5 billion (GBP 3 billion when including Barnett funding for devolved administrations) for the National Skills Fund, meeting a commitment made in the Conservative manifesto (2019). The fund will help businesses find and hire the workers they need; as well as supporting adults to flourish and fulfil their potential through high quality training.
- b. Skills Bootcamps aim to secure benefits for adults by giving them access to in-demand skills training and a guaranteed interview for a more sustainable, higher-skilled job and higher wages over time. The benefits for employers include helping them fill specific skills shortage vacancies, enabling them to become more productive, more quickly.
- c. The overall aims of the Skills Bootcamps are:
  - to deliver \*flexible training programmes lasting up to 16 weeks, based on employer / sector 'in-demand' skills needs which may be either regulated (i.e. qualification based) or non-regulated (e.g. based on alignment with industry standards) enabling adults to do training around work and other commitments, looking to gain work, additional responsibilities, or access new opportunities and will offer a guaranteed job interview (in the case of a new job) to individual participants on completion of the course.
  - to address the needs of adults (19+) who are full-time and part-time employed, unemployed, returning to work after a break or self-employed, and provide individuals with wider access to opportunities to retrain, update or formalise their skills or acquire specialist skills.
  - to address the needs of employers and the wider economy, to deliver targeted interventions to meet short-medium term demand to fill vacancies and drive productivity. They will help fill mediumhigher level vacancies and bring individuals closer to better jobs, by linking them with line of sight to a job/ different role, additional responsibilities or new opportunities/contracts
  - to help fill vacancies and bring individuals closer to better jobs (including those currently in employment), by linking them with line of sight to a job / different role, additional responsibilities or new opportunities / contracts
- d. We initially tested Skills Bootcamps in a range of Digital Skills such as digital marketing, software development and cyber security from

Autumn 2020 and have expanded across England to include a wider range of more technical and specialist courses such as construction, retrofit, electro technical, photonics, marine design, electrical installation and more.

e. Any future mainstreaming decisions will be based on an evaluation of the Skills Bootcamp model to evidence what works and is subject to funding availability beyond FY2023-24. Potential Suppliers awarded grant funding this FY (2023-24) will be informed of future mainstreaming decisions in due course.

## The Skills Bootcamp Delivery Model

Skills Bootcamps are intensive, Level 3-5 or equivalent flexible training courses up to 16 weeks, with a guaranteed job interview (in the case of a new job), which equip adults with technical skills that enable them to access in-demand jobs, apprenticeships, new opportunities and an increased level of income over time (including for the self-employed).



All Skills Bootcamps must meet the requirements posed in the mainstream **Skills Bootcamp Delivery Model** to be considered for funding. We are currently developing a 'Red Lines' document which will set out the characteristics that a Skills Bootcamp must have in order to be considered a Skills Bootcamp.

#### **Skill Areas**

We require substantial evidence of demand for the skills developed through the Skills Bootcamp, including evidence of vacancies in the local labour market. Suppliers must cite the evidence they are relying on regarding local labour market needs and demonstrate due regard to the skills analysis and priorities of Local Enterprise Partnership(s)(LEPs) and their Skills Advisory Panels, Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCA), Local Authorities (LA) and show how they align with their Local Skills Improvement Plan(s).

Our current priority sectors nationally for Skills Bootcamps are Digital, Construction, Technical, Green, HGV Driving, Creative and Early Years. We wish to encourage innovation and diversity in proposals, and we do recognise that Skills Bootcamps may not always accord exactly with these divisions. Where there is demand for a skill area that meets the general criteria, but is not in a sector listed here, it can be procured using up to 30%<sup>1</sup> of your grant.

# **Skills Bootcamps - overarching principles**

Skills Bootcamps are flexible training courses of up to 16 weeks, with a guaranteed job interview (where a candidate is being recruited to a new job or new opportunities), which equip adults with skills that enable them to access in-demand jobs, apprenticeships, and new opportunities (for the self-employed) leading to increased income and productivity over time.

Skills Bootcamps must be delivered at Level 3-5 or equivalent, with the exception of Skills Bootcamps in Construction, Green Skills and HGV Driving which may be delivered at Level 2 or equivalent.

Ministers have recently reiterated this point and are unlikely to agree any further Level 2 Skills Bootcamps. The benefits analysis of the Skills Bootcamps programme as a whole was developed based on the premise of increasing skill levels at 3-5 where the return on investment is higher. That said, we recognise that in some cases the gap in a specific skill can have a great effect – such as HGV Driving in the height of the shortage, and some areas of construction and direct green skills. However, it is important to ensure that we are tackling a genuine skills shortage or gap, rather than temporarily addressing a pay and conditions issue.

All training must either be accredited, aligned to occupational standards managed by the Institute for Apprenticeship & Technical Education, or utilise a recognised standard for representing attainment (e.g. RARPA, SFIA) – Where the third pathway is chosen, we would expect a higher standard of evidence for employer engagement.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This % is 100% in deeper devolution areas

## **Learner Eligibility**

To be funded, learners must meet all the following criteria:

- Must be aged 19 or older on 31 August 2024.
- have the right to work in the UK. This can be checked on gov.uk/viewright-to-work and
- meet residency requirements. Providers should refer to the <u>Residency</u> <u>Eligibility</u> section of the AEB funding rules before accepting an individual onto a Skills Bootcamp and
- **live in England**, further detail is provided below.

## **Delivery outside of England**

You must not actively recruit learners who live or work outside of England.

We will fund an individual who lives in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland if specialist skills training is only available in England and the individual intends to work in England as a result of the Skills Bootcamp. We do not expect these numbers to be significant.

For learning delivered at an employee's workplace, we will fund individuals whose main employment or normal place of work is in England.

Suppliers located close to the borders can deliver Skills Bootcamps to learners who are not resident in England if the learner intends to work in England as a result of the Skills Bootcamp. Delivery must take place in England. We do not expect these numbers to be significant.

#### **Target Groups**

All Skills Bootcamps must be open to all eligible adults within the communities they serve, including those employed, not in work or self-employed, serving prisoners due to be released within 6 months of completion of a Skills Bootcamp and those on Temporary Release.

Skills Bootcamps aim to support participants to improved employment outcomes. Suppliers should consider how their Skills Bootcamp will support these participants effectively into a positive employment outcome.

#### **Prior Attainment and experience**

No prior attainment is required unless specifically prescribed by an employer and/or specifically related to the job and sector within which the vacancies offered are situated. Suppliers should screen potential learners and select those who will benefit from enrolling onto a Skills Bootcamp, including by checking that the potential Learner does not already have a significant proportion of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that the Skills Bootcamp is designed to help them acquire. Suppliers should signpost to other opportunities where a Skills Bootcamp is not appropriate for a potential Learner including a referral to the website of the National Careers Service (https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk).

However, Suppliers may define their own selection processes and/or assessments as part of their approach to recruitment of learners.

## **Funding conditions**

You must not transfer funding between the following budgets:

- Skills Bootcamps
- ESFA funded AEB
- 19 to 24 traineeship programmes
- Level 3 adult offer
- Apprenticeships
- Advanced learner loans bursary fund
- Advanced learner loan facility
- Multiply

We have adjusted learner eligibility so participants enrolled on DWP's Restart programme can access Skills Bootcamps, recognising differences in provision. However, if suppliers are delivering both a DWP Restart programme and a DfE Skills Bootcamp, they must ensure that they are delivering two separate sets of activities to receive funding from both programmes for an individual learner.

An adult may only undertake one Skills Bootcamp per funding year (1 April to 31 March) and must not be on more than one Skills Bootcamp at any one time. However, where an individual starts a Skills Bootcamp and then realises that it is not suitable for them for whatever reason, they may start, and be

funded for, another Skills Bootcamp so long as only the first milestone payment has not been reached.

Providers have an obligation to ask prospective learners whether they have already undertaken a Skills Bootcamp in that funding year and if they are currently undertaking a Skills Bootcamp.

Learners may transfer between Skills Bootcamps within a year but only under the following conditions:

- The learner must have left their first Skills Bootcamp before the first payment milestone cut-off.
- The learner may only start two Skills Bootcamps maximum within a year.

Where an employer is training an existing employee, they must contribute to the cost of the course. In the case of large employers, DfE will cover 70% of the cost of the Skills Bootcamp with the remaining 30% of the agreed learner rate to be funded by the employer. Existing employees are defined as someone directly employed by the employer, not a temporary worker, self-employed and contractor, director or officeholder. However, where a director or office holder is also an employee the employer will be expected to contribute. Further information on <a href="employment status">employment status</a> is available.

In the case of small and medium employers DfE will cover 90% of the cost of the Skills Bootcamp, so the employer contribution is reduced to 10%. A small or medium sized employer is defined as having fewer than 250 employees.

Suppliers are free to agree further funding contributions from employers should they want to enhance the content of the Skills Bootcamp.

Suppliers are responsible for ensuring they collect, and maintain evidence of, payment of the employer's contribution.

Courses are fully funded by Government for independent learners (individuals not being co-funded by their employer), and for the self-employed.

Individuals must not be charged for any element of the Skills Bootcamp.

#### **Payment Milestones**

There are three payment milestones associated with a learner on a Skills Bootcamp. Payments will be made on the following basis:

Table 1: Payment Milestone details: This is a summary; for detailed advice on what must be provided to obtain a milestone payment, please see the evidence section.

Contract Delivery	Outcome On job offer (or equivalent)	
Course completion and interview offered		
30%	30%	
Completion of the training and completion of a final assessment (final assessment as set out in the service requirements), and;  • For the independent learner: an offer of an interview for a vacancy which meets the criteria set out in the service requirements;  • For the co-funded learner: an offer of an interview for a new role/responsibility within the current organisation which meets the criteria	<ul> <li>For the independent learner:         An offer for a job which meets the criteria set out in the service requirements     </li> <li>For the co-funded learner: the offer or commencement of a new role/responsibility within the current organisation which meets the criteria set out n the service requirements</li> <li>For the self-employed learner: Learner has secured new work/new contracts which meet the criteria set out in the service</li> </ul>	
If an independent learner plans to be self- employed, they can achieve a self-employed learner completion; and a self-employed learner who plans to become employed can achieve an independent learner completion.  Suppliers must achieve Completions by 31st March 2024 and in line with delivery plans.	requirements  If an independent learner plans to be self-employed, they can achieve a self-employed learner outcome; and a self-employed learner who plans to become employed can achieve an independent learner outcome.  Suppliers should note that the learner must have finished the training element of the Skills Bootcamp for the Supplier to be able to claim a Positive Outcome payment.	
	Course completion and interview offered:  Course completion and interview offered:  Completion of the training and completion of a final assessment (final assessment as set out in the service requirements), and;  • For the independent learner: an offer of an interview for a vacancy which meets the criteria set out in the service requirements;  • For the co-funded learner: an offer of an interview for a new role/responsibility within the current organisation which meets the criteria set out in the service requirements  • For the self-employed learner: written confirmation of how the new training has been/will be applied to get new work or contracts which meet the criteria set out in the service	

Completions via the ILR, Contract Monitoring	
Plan and Learner Datasheet.	
	Suppliers must achieve Positive
	Outcomes within the six months
	after the training finishes.[Please
	note this is not six months after the
	full Completion milestone, but after
	the training element has finished.]c
	The Supplier should report on the
	next monthly reporting cycle any new
	learner Positive Outcomes via the
	ILR, Contract Monitoring Plan and
	Learner Datasheet.

## **Pathways to Accelerated Apprenticeships**

Commencement	Contract Delivery		Outcome
		Course completion and interview offered	On job offer (or equivalent)
40%		30%	30%
Paid on the learner completing 14 qualifying days of training and on completion of the initial assessment (initial assessment as set out in the service requirements). We expect the 14 qualifying days of the training course to include a minimum of 10 guided learning hours.	<ul> <li>(final assessment as set out in the service requirements), and;</li> <li>For the independent lead an offer of an interview of an accelerated apprenticeship or other (which is not an apprenticeship) vacancy</li> </ul>	pletion of the training and oletion of a final assessment assessment assessment as set out in the ce requirements), and;  For the independent learner: an offer of an interview for an accelerated apprenticeship or other job	<ul> <li>For the independent learner:         An offer for an accelerated apprenticeship or for a job (which is not an apprenticeship) that meets the criteria set out in the service requirements.     </li> <li>For the co-funded learner the offer or commencement of a new role/responsibility within the current organisation which meets the criteria set out in the service requirements</li> </ul>
Suppliers must achieve Starts by 31st March 2024, in line with delivery plans and in time to achieve Completions by this deadline also. The Supplier should report	•	requirements;  For the co-funded learner: an offer of an interview for a new role/responsibility within the current organisation which meets the criteria set	For the self employed learner:     Learner has secured new     work/new contracts which     meet the criteria set out in the     service requirements.  If an independent learner plans to be self-employed, they can achieve a self-employed learner outcome; and

on the next monthly reporting cycle any new learner Starts via the ILR, Contract Monitoring Plan and Learner Datasheet

- out in the service requirements
- For the self-employed learner: written confirmation of how the new training has been/will be applied to get new work or contracts which meet the criteria set out in the service requirements

If an independent learner plans to be self-employed, they can achieve a self-employed learner completion; and a self-employed learner who plans to become employed can achieve an independent learner completion.

Suppliers must achieve Completions by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and in line with delivery plans. The Supplier should report on the next monthly reporting cycle any new learner Completions via the ILR, Contract Monitoring Plan and Learner Datasheet.

a self-employed learner who plans to become employed can achieve an independent learner outcome.

The offer of an apprenticeship that has not been accelerated cannot be used to claim for the Outcome payment in this model. Suppliers should note that the learner must have completed the training element of the Skills Bootcamp to be able to claim an outcome payment.

Suppliers must achieve Positive
Outcomes within the six months after
the training finishes. Please note this
is not six months after the full
Completion milestone, but after the
training element has finished. The
Supplier should report on the next
monthly reporting cycle any new
learner Positive Outcomes via the ILR,
Contract Monitoring Plan and Learner
Datasheet.

We recognise that there may be instances where a learner has changed their status part way through their Skills Bootcamp, e.g., from self-employed to actively looking for, and obtaining, a job and therefore their expected completion/outcome has changed. Where that is the case, you should discuss this with your Grant Manager to confirm what evidence requirements are expected to enable a claim to be made.

## **Course Length**

The Provider must offer Digital Skills Bootcamps at a minimum of 100 Guided Learning Hours and all other sectors at a minimum of 60<sup>2</sup> Guided Learning Hours (GLH) over a maximum of 16 weeks.

GLH are the time a Learner spends being taught or instructed by, or otherwise participating in education or training under the immediate

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Except HGV Driving which may be less than 60 GLH

guidance or supervision of – a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training, whether online or in person.

Pre-recorded content does not count towards GLHs.

#### **Course Content & Flexibility**

The Provider must ensure that the Skills Bootcamps:

- can be reasonably delivered to a Learner concurrently employed in either a full-time or part-time role or around other commitments
- are accessible to Learners
- Training Providers must make reasonable adjustments, as appropriate for those Learners with Protected Characteristics (as defined by the Equalities Act (2010)).
- DfE will not fund any part of any learner's learning aim or programme that duplicates provision they have received from any other source, known as double funding.

The Provider must deliver a 'wraparound service' of Learner support (for example, using a coaching and mentoring approach, from programme application stage, during, and post programme, to move people into jobs/new roles and opportunities.

This should include upfront screening of applicants, soft skills (or work readiness) training to support the occupational skills training, vacancy/role/opportunity identification, providing pastoral services to help participants complete the Skills Bootcamp and follow-up services to participants and employers to support job placement mentorship, pastoral support) and high-quality advice and guidance to support the learner into a positive employment outcome (for example, CV writing support, mock interviews).

We expect all Independent Learners (not co-funded by their employer, and not self-employed) to progress on to a <u>guaranteed</u> job interview upon the completion of the Skills Bootcamp. This should be a genuine vacancy related to the skills gained through the Skills Bootcamp and the job must be expected to last at least 12 weeks. Providers should ensure interviews are offered to all independent learners; without the offer of an interview the Skills Bootcamp is not complete.

The Provider may deliver Skills Bootcamps remotely, online or face to face or through a blended approach.

## **Provider Eligibility**

This programme is open to all training providers registered on the UK Register of Learning Providers – providers not currently registered can apply <a href="here">here</a>. It is also open to any employer/s or employer bodies.

#### **Employer Engagement & Involvement**

MCA/LEPs/LAs should ensure training providers engage employers from the outset in the design and / or delivery of their Skills Bootcamp provision and to gain commitment to interview candidates from the Skills Bootcamps for relevant vacancies, or to establish what the impact will be if they are training their own employees. Training Providers may be required by the Department to provide evidence of its work with employers. This could include the provision of behavioural skills support, coaching and mentoring, design and / or the delivery of content as well as evidence of interviews taking place and where participants have been recruited by the employer.

We have a target of 60% of employers involved in Skills Bootcamp being SMEs.

#### **Grant Monitoring and Reporting**

We are expecting to use the ILR to report learner details and calculate payments from 1 April 2024 so the content of this section is likely to change.

The grant management plan will be utilised for the purposes of recording learner progress against starts, completions and outcomes, employer engagement, recording and monitoring delivery risks and tracking spend and drawdown against grant awards. The revised plan will be shared with Grant recipients at the earliest opportunity.

Grant recipients will be required to comply with the following conditions:

- a. on or before 1 April 2024 deliver a Report containing a delivery plan showing a delivery trajectory for learner starts per supplier/sub-contractor and per each Skills Bootcamp.
- b. Your Grant Manager will schedule performance review meetings at a mutually convenient date, commencing from May 2023, and likely each month thereafter.

In advance of the scheduled monthly review meeting, you will be requested to submit an updated grant management plan reflecting the latest position across all elements covered in the plan and to include up-to-date learner data for the period covering at least up to the end of the previous month.

c. Provide ad hoc reports in response to wider requests from the Department for information to support upward reporting and further development of the Skills Bootcamp programme from time to time.

#### **Roles & Responsibilities**

MCA/LEPs/LAs should provide on request details of key personnel responsible for the delivery obligations contained within the GOL.

#### Data submission

The Provider must supply the Department with data in accordance with the following:

- in line with agreed audit arrangements
- in adherence with the UK GDPR and DPA 2018
- to support payments to be made
- to enable reconciliation to take place
- to support the grant management process; and
- any written request from the Department

MCA/LEPs/LAs should prepare up-to-date completed data submission template(s) at the following pre-determined intervals (unless agreed separately with your Grant Manager):

D ( D ( ) 0	O I I D / Aoth II I			
Data Reporting Sequence	Submission Date – 10 <sup>th</sup> working day			
Progress up to end of July 23	Reported no later than 14 July 23			
2. Progress up to end of September 23.	reported no later than 14 October 23			
3. Progress up to end December 23	reported no later than 16 January 24			
4. Progress up to end February 24	reported no later than 14 March 24.			
The third data submission is to account for the work DfE is required to				
complete towards financial year end.				
4. Progress up to end June 24	reported no later than 14 July 24.			
5. Progress up to end of September 24	reported no later than 13 October 24.			
The fourth and fifth data submission is to capture learner outcome data. Data				
should be submitted in a timely manner, the cut off point for all outcomes data				
collection and claims is 6 months up to the end of September 2023 i.e. 6				
months from the end of the FY23-24.				

DfE have issued a copy of the data template for completion. Guidance is included within the data return template.

The expectation is that a separate data return template is used per provider per Skills Bootcamp.

#### Therefore:

a) if a Skills Bootcamp has multiple providers, a separate data return is expected

for each provider for that Skills Bootcamp.

- b) if a single provider delivers multiple Skills Bootcamp under your grant, then a separate return is required for each Skills Bootcamp in their portfolio.
- c) multiple cohorts of the same Skills Bootcamp delivered by a single provider must be captured on the same data return.

Suppliers/sub-contractors must issue appropriate privacy notices to learners and employers to enable data collection, sharing and reporting.

## **Payments to Grant Recipients**

In addition to providing a signed copy of the Grant Funding Agreement, you are then requested to follow the instructions on Bank Account Details (in Annex B) of the GOL and provide details of your bank account which must be at a bank authorised to conduct banking business in England. This will allow us to set you up on the Department's DfE ERP payment system to receive Funding.

Payment claims must be submitted in accordance with Clause 10.1 of the general Terms and Conditions and may only be sent to the Department once the Grant Funding Agreement has been signed and any pre-disbursement conditions have been met.

Payments will be disbursed into the bank account with the number provided through the process laid down in Annex B and the Department shall not be responsible for any errors caused by any mistakes in the information provided by the Grant recipients.

Please note that any delays in returning the documents could result in a delay to the payment of Funding.

# Claiming 'up-front' payment in advance of expenditure

Under the grant terms you are able to claim: a percentage of your planned delivery costs (50% in FY2023-24) 100% of your planned management costs\*

\*The percentage of delivery costs payable in advance of expenditure is under review with HM Treasury and may be reduced to 40% in FY2024-25.

#### To claim this payment:

Complete Annex E, confirming the costs as outlined in your proposal. Complete Annex D, ensuring this is signed by authorised representative. Send both accurately completed documents to your Grant Manager. Any retained funds from FY23-24 will be ducted from the value due – this is purely administrative to avoid clawback.

You can submit your claim after your Grant Offer letter has been issued, signed and returned and payment will be made as soon as possible, but not before 1 April 2024.

If you have not claimed payments from DfE previously you will need to complete a vendor registration form using the link below at the earliest opportunity

<u>Provide information about your banking and payments to DfE-GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</u>

#### **End of Year Accounting**

At the end of the financial year, you will be required to submit an annex G(ii) form verifying your spend over the financial year, which is to be signed off by your accounting/151 officer.

This will likely be required by 30 April 2025.

Any payment claims will be required to have been authorised prior to the annex G(ii) being accepted.

Your Grant Manager will work with you towards financial year end to undertake reconciliation activity of spend over the financial year. This will include obtaining verification of your actual management costs over the financial year. Any variations to the value paid as part of the 'payment in advance' for 100% of your planned management costs will be reconciled if applicable and not already done so earlier in the grant management process.

#### Learner and Employer Evidence Checks

The DfE may conduct random sampling checks of learner and employer evidence throughout the duration of the grant period aligned to reporting periods. We reserve the right to vary the volume and cadence of checks over the lifetime of the grant

However, if any issues arise from any part of the process relating to data returns, payment claims or previous evidence checks, the DfE reserves to right to conduct evidence checks in advance of releasing payment. This includes commissioning additional checks in terms of volume and periodicity on an ad-hoc basis as required.

DfE ae currently working with our Corporate Assurance Team to review the process for FY24-25.

#### **Quality Assurance Team**

The intention of this team is to support providers and the authorities who oversee them, such as yourselves, to deliver consistently high-quality Skills Bootcamps, identify and share best practice and promote continuous improvement in Skills Bootcamps delivery now and in the future.

In the near-term, we plan to conduct visits to each Skills Bootcamp to observe teaching and learning, have discussions with key staff, learners, and other stakeholders, as well as reviewing relevant documentation. Where possible we would like to do these as joint visits in partnership with you. Ofsted began inspections of Skills Bootcamps provision in FY 2023-24.

## **Comms & Branding**

Please refer to the guidance to align marketing activity with the requirements set out in the guidance.

# **Publicity and Comms**

Providers, and where appropriate sub-contractors, will be required to provide a web link to more information about your Skills Bootcamp(s) and how to sign up. The link will be shared on the Skills Bootcamps Gov.uk web page that will be created here <a href="Find a Skills Bootcamp">Find a Skills Bootcamp</a>. Your Grant Manager will provide further details on how to do this.

#### **Whistleblowing and Complaints Guidance**

Providers, and where appropriate sub-contractors, must ensure that all applicants, learners, and staff linked to Skills Bootcamps delivery are aware of the DFE's Whistleblowing and <a href="Complaints">Complaints</a> policies and processes. This will be monitored as part of the grant monitoring process. Whistleblowing involves entering a 'whistleblowing' <a href="webform">webform</a>. Whistleblowing entries for Skills Bootcamps must be clearly marked as 'Skills Bootcamps' and will submitted via the DfE's whistleblowing submission process and will be escalated to the relevant policy team.