



Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

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To all MPs in England

Dear Colleague

Update on the Lifetime Skills Guarantee

Following the Written Ministerial Statement my Department published today, I wanted to update you on the next steps to delivering the extension to the Level 3 entitlement for adults, a key aspect of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee that will be funded from the National Skills Fund.

The Lifetime Skills Guarantee, which the Prime Minister announced in September, promises to help people across England get the skills they need at every stage of their life as we build back better from the Coronavirus pandemic. We know that now, more than ever, we need to invest in adult skills and training.

The National Skills Fund is a long term, substantial investment of £2.5bn (£3bn including devolved administrations) which will drive adult retraining and support our ambitious agenda for reform to Further Education.

Starting from April 2021 any adult looking to achieve their first full Level 3 (which is equivalent to a technical certificate or diploma, or two full A levels) will be able to access a fully funded course. This will give them new skills and greater prospects in the labour market. We will ensure that, if they choose to study a short course this will not prevent them from taking a further course. We have focused on provision that ensures good returns for individuals, employers, and the economy.

We plan to spend £95 million on this important new commitment in year one. This will include a funding uplift for qualifications included in this offer, to support providers to scale up their level 3 provision for adults and meet the needs of learners as we build back better from the pandemic.

We are working closely with providers and devolved areas to ensure this national offer is delivered effectively across England, and that funding is targeted at valuable subjects that are a key priority for the nation. We will keep the list under regular review to ensure it adapts to the changing needs of the economy. There will be a facility for Awarding Organisations and areas with devolved adult education budget responsibility to suggest additions to the list.

Adults accessing this new level 3 adult offer can do so in the confidence that they will be gaining the skills and abilities that are genuinely needed and valued by employers and will help them secure that better job that may have been previously out of reach. There will be a facility for Awarding Organisations and areas with devolved adult education budget responsibility to suggest additions to the list.

The full course list can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-skills-fund>

The courses on offer will deliver a wide range of skills that will 'open the door' to many jobs and sectors. Qualifications in these sector subject areas will help individuals access new jobs, and in many cases, earn higher wages too. From April we will be offering access to qualifications to support the following areas:

- Engineering
- Building and Construction
- Manufacturing Technologies
- Transportation Operations and Maintenance
- Business Management
- Public Services
- Accounting and Finance
- Medicine and Dentistry
- Horticulture and Forestry
- Health and Social Care
- ICT Practitioners
- ICT for Users
- Mathematics and Statistics
- Science
- Agriculture
- Nursing and Vocations and Subjects Allied to Medicine
- Child Development and Wellbeing
- Environmental conservation
- Teaching and lecturing
- Warehousing and distribution

This funding will be delivered through the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) in non-devolved areas and delivered through Mayoral Combined Authorities through a separate Section 31 grant, and equivalent grant for the Greater London Authority, on the strict condition that funding is used for its intended purpose. We will also introduce assurance processes, so that we have the confidence that funding is being used to deliver the ambition set out in the PM's speech, but more importantly, actually delivers the skills the nation and local areas need.

Turning to another element of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee, I would like to remind you of the expansion of Skills Bootcamps, which started in the West Midlands, Greater Manchester and Lancashire, and Liverpool City Region and have now expanded to Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, the Heart of the South West, and Leeds City Region.

These flexible courses, which complement the extension to the new level 3 adult offer, last approximately 12-16 weeks, and give participants the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer.

These bootcamps will expand to cover not only digital skills like software development, digital marketing, and data analytics but also technical skills training such as welding and engineering construction.

This is only the start for this innovative approach to adult training. I can confirm that we will invest £43m through the National Skills Fund to extend Skills Bootcamps further across England in 2021 increasing the national coverage of this new offer and trailblazing new skills to support our labour market and develop this model further.

We will continue to build on our wider plans for adult skills and engage closely with stakeholders as we progress and develop detailed plans for the National Skills Fund, including our consultation planned for spring next year.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gavin Williamson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State for Education