

ESF Skills for Growth Specification Construction Skills for Growth & Productivity

Change Log

Version	Date	Author	Section	Changes
V1	27/09/2021	Carly	All	Draft spec
V2	29/09/2021	Joe	All	Track changes
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Contents

1. Introduction
2. Strategic Background
3. ESF Skills for Growth programme overview
4. Eligibility of Individuals
5. Priorities for this sector
6. Scope, Design and Delivery
7. Critical Success Factors
8. Reporting
9. Timescale
10. Budget
11. Payment model
12. Performance requirements
13. Data collection & GM Individual Tracker (GMIT)
14. Monitoring and compliance
15. Organisational Experience
16. Evaluation
17. Governance and Reporting
18. Marketing and Communications
19. Information Governance

Annexes

Annex #	Title	Contents
Annex 1	Data set requirements	A list of data items required related to individuals before, during and after delivery.
Annex 2	GMCA Performance management and compliance framework	A description of how performance will be managed and improvement action to be taken if necessary.
Annex 3	Information Governance	Information Governance requirements and guidance in relation to the specification.
Annex 4	Values and Standards	A description of the policies and plans Providers should have in place to meet required values of delivery.
Annex 5	ESF Skills for Growth outline	A description of the overarching ESF Skills for Growth programme.
Annex 6	Glossary of Terms	A list of terms used in the specification and annexes, and their definitions.

1. Introduction

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) is looking to procure a lead organisation to deliver training which will support skills challenges faced within the Construction and Infrastructure sector. The training developed for this sector will form part of the commissioned provision element of the wider Skills for Growth programme. Both national and regional research indicates several skills challenges in the sector, a summary of which can be found in the [Industry Labour Market and Skills Intelligence Report – Construction](#) which will aim to be addressed by this specification.

Greater Manchester (GM) has secured approx. £40m European Social Fund (ESF) to deliver GM's Skills for Growth Programme. An overview of the full programme has been provided to set the scene for how the provision of Construction and Infrastructure skills, being procured through this specification, fits in to the wider model (see Annex 5). The main aim of the wider programme is to create both business growth and progression for individuals in work.

Serving as a foundation sector of GM's economy, Construction and Infrastructure is an important sector for the region in terms of employment and skills, and in terms of public and private investment and growth. Around 85,000 people are employed in the sector across GM, representing around 6.3% of the total workforce. Like most regions in the UK, construction companies operating in GM are made up a wide range of businesses including main contractors and developers, architects, civil engineering consultancies, labour agencies, subcontractors and sole traders.

Most construction roles are entirely place-based (i.e. performed onsite at a specific physical location). This means that the labour force is required to "follow the work", especially in cases of large infrastructure projects. As a result of this, construction workers are more comfortable than most other professions with working away from home, long commute times and sometimes relocating to be closer to a work site. Less than a third of construction surveyed in 2019 had worked solely within a 20-mile radius of their residence¹. This reflects the shifting workplaces often seen in the sector, thus making it difficult to project accurate measurements of size and makeup of the labour market.

One of the 4 key pillars of the Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy² is a commitment to the Clean Growth Grand Challenge. This includes work towards low-carbon buildings, retrofitting of old buildings, and development of new modern methods of construction. Many of these ambitions will require close work with the Construction and Infrastructure sector – including housebuilders, infrastructure bodies, and public and private sector commissioners. While the appetite at a national and regional level for green growth is high, there is a good opportunity for GM's Construction sector to become a national leader in this area.

This specification is part of a longer-term plan to develop skills to ensure that the sector is better able to recruit and retain staff, whilst improving the quality of the service. Upskilling and investing in staff training and development has been highlighted as a key factor in reducing staff turnover. Programmes launched as part of this specification will not be the totality of provision procured in this sector; it compliments activity previously commissioned as part of the Retrofit commission and focuses on specific skills needs and concerns that have been identified at present.

As this specification sets out, GMCA is commissioning **a package worth up to £1.2m** to deliver key training within this sector before September 2023. This will be for a total delivery package consisting of multiple projects. In total, a minimum of **1,000** unique **individuals** will

¹ [Workforce Mobility and Skills in the UK Construction Sector 2018-2019 North West - CITB](#)

² [Greater Manchester Strategy - Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](#)

be upskilled with new competencies equipping them to succeed in this sector. We expect this will be delivered against three training strands, which have been identified working in partnership with employers:

- Training Strand 1: Upskilling Multi-trades
- Training Strand 2: Construction Business Management
- Training Strand 3: Digital Transformation

The overarching aim of the package is to improve skills, create pathways for progression, and prepare people for higher apprenticeships. Due to the various specialist strands of training to be delivered, it is expected that an application will be a partnership with various providers coming together to deliver different aspects of the training strands.

Applicants will need a good understanding of the Construction landscape in the region and be up to date with sector trends and any best practice already being piloted across GM.

Within this specification, we set out the requirements for this Construction skills training package that will play a key role in the wider GM Skills for Growth programme. The Skills for Growth programme is purposefully iterative in its development and commissioning, the aim of which is to put GM in a unique position to build a truly collaborative programme that shapes skills delivery and responds to skills needs that emerge throughout the three-year programme.

The Skills for Growth programme provides an opportunity to support businesses as they rapidly develop and innovate to maintain and create economic activity and jobs, with a focus on increased productivity through developing the skills of their workforce. Previous to the pandemic, the foundational and frontier growth sectors identified in [GM's Independent Prosperity Review](#) (IPR) and [Local Industrial Strategy](#) (LIS) were key priorities for this programme in the city-region. Skills provision in these areas continues to be just as, if not even more, critical to GM's recovery from COVID-19.

2. Strategic Background

Skills underpin every facet of life in GM, from running the businesses our economy needs, to building the homes we live in and delivering the public services we rely upon. As set out in The Department for Education's January 2021 [Skills for Jobs White Paper](#) & subsequent [Skills & Post 16 Education Bill](#) both nationally and in GM, there is a pressing need for more highly skilled people than ever before, trained effectively to grow the economy and raise productivity.

Our underpinning strategies, the [Local Industrial Strategy](#) (LIS) and the [Greater Manchester Strategy](#) (GMS), recognise the critical role of effectively targeted and delivered skills investment in unlocking and enabling economic growth, with a system built with the employer voice and skills requirements at the heart. Both strategies together with the GM Employment and Skills Advisory Panel's [Local Skills Report & Labour Market Plan](#), recognise the central role of skills in determining an individual's employment status and prospects, along with the necessity of a skilled workforce in driving overall economic growth and productivity.

GM needs an education, skills and employment support system that works for everyone, as set out in the priorities within the GMS:

- Young people equipped for life and work
- Good jobs with opportunities for people to progress and develop
- A thriving and productive economy in all parts of the city-region

The GM skills system is facing several challenges both now and into the future. The full impact of covid-19 and of Brexit on the labour market are yet to be seen, however, GM businesses will need to continue to adapt to new models in order to survive, which in turn will impact the skills needs within our workforces. Greater international competition, the impact of climate change and faster technological change will put many roles that exist today at risk. However, with these challenges comes a myriad of new opportunities for the city-region. GM's economic strength now is in its diversity: in contrast to many other cities in the UK, the city-region is not reliant on a single sector for growth and that offers real opportunities for both business and residents. All of GM's skills and work programmes form part of a broad and complex skills landscape contributing to the talent pipeline which supports that economic growth.

Forecasts suggest greater demand for higher-level technical and specialist skills in the future. To realise our ambitions for GM as a dynamic, inclusive and knowledge-intensive city region, GM's skills base must improve, particularly in those sectors identified as a priority for the city-region. Despite recent progress and the commitment, expertise and enthusiasm of providers and stakeholders, the current skills system does not deliver enough people with high quality, relevant skills and, at higher levels, the technical knowledge required by employers.

Within the GMCA [Education, Work and Skills Directorate](#), we are committed to strengthening employer engagement, developing the work and skills infrastructure to meet the needs of the economy and growing the quantity and quality of Apprenticeships and wider skills interventions. We are looking to reinforce the importance and value of businesses in the development and delivery of skills, engaging with the skills system to provide meaningful experiences of the world of work and ensuring that the skills needed for growth and increased productivity are co-developed with businesses.

3. ESF Skills for Growth Programme Overview

The Skills for Growth programme is being funded by ESF and therefore seeks to respond to the ESF priorities as set out in Annex 5, where a full overview of the programme can be found. This specification and the resulting commission contribute to the skills delivery element of the programme and is one of many that will take place over the coming months as the intelligence emerges.

The skills delivery element of the programme is focusing on increasing the skills levels of employed people, increasing the number of people with technical and job specific skills, and increasing skills levels of priority groups (see below). More than 50% of individuals accessing the programme will need to evidence progression.

The Skills for Growth programme as a whole will work with more than 25,000 individuals and more than 3,000 SME's prioritising the following target groups as a minimum:

- 54% of individuals to be female
- 17% of individuals over 50 years of age
- 20% of individuals from ethnic minorities
- 10% of individuals with disabilities
- 5% of individuals from a single adult household with dependent children.

Working with employers, business networks, providers & colleges, industry intelligence is being used to inform highly relevant commissioning of skills delivery through a procured framework of approved training organisations, GMCA's Education, Work and Skills Flexible Procurement System (FPS).

The programme will be iterative in its delivery, in that a constant feedback loop will be created to inform next steps on the programme as intelligence and further learning emerges. York Consulting have been appointed as the evaluation partner, their findings throughout the programme will play a key role in informing our development of the programme.

4. Eligibility of Individuals

Individuals accessing the programme will need to meet the [ESF eligibility criteria](#) and responsibility for collecting evidence on individuals (at entry to the programme), results and outputs will be the procured providers'. Please see guidance on [ESF data Evidence requirements](#) for more detail on evidencing.

The programme will have a core focus on supporting those **employed and in work**, definition as per ESF guidance. The programme does not exclude working with those that are unemployed in some exceptional circumstances (e.g., recently left employment). This will be subject to individuals' circumstances and case by case approval from the GMCA.

In line with the ambitions of the programme the aim is to reach as many individuals as possible across GM with the packages of skills support on the programme. Any individual claimed through the programme may only be claimed once, as a unique individual (see section 13 for further details on tracking individuals). Therefore, it is expected that the provider will work with the individual to help them choose the correct training strand and individuals will only complete one of the training strands each. However, in the exceptional circumstance an individual may want to complete more than one strand prior approval will be needed from the GMCA programme office.

In addition to the ESF eligibility, individuals will also need to evidence at entry to the programme the following requirements. They must:

- Not have completed any other skills training programmes funded by any other GM Skills for Growth programme.
- Be currently employed in a construction or infrastructure setting. This includes individuals in work with a full/part-time contract, zero hours contract, furloughed, in work claiming Universal Credit, and self-employed (or unemployed with prior approval as mentioned above).
- Have the baseline level of Maths, English, and Digital literacy as well as the correct attitudes & competencies to complete the course. We would expect to see an initial assessment process designed with strong input from employer partners.
- Be able to evidence right to work and live in the UK
- Be aged over 16.
- Live and / or work within Great Manchester (individual's residency or employer's trading address must be on the approved postcode list provided on the tracker system mentioned in section 13)

5. Priorities for this sector – Construction & Infrastructure

Intelligence gathering by GMCA is ongoing and focuses on different areas of the Construction and Infrastructure sector. The first phase of skills intelligence has been pulled together into a Skills Intelligence Report for Construction and Infrastructure³. The report reflects what employers have reported and has also been supported by data around the GM labour market.

³ [industry-skills-intelligence-pack-construction.pdf \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](#)

Greater Manchester is a hub of construction activity in the North West, with the city centre attracting some of the highest investment in the country. As a region, the North West is second only to London and the South East for construction output. As a result, the sector is crucial to both the region and to Greater Manchester, both in terms of employment of residents and the growth of the wider economy.

Increasing investment in the sector is driving changes in the number and types of roles required. Over the next five years, GM will see approximately £14bn of new construction projects start. This increased investment combines with existing shortages to drive demand; skilled tradespeople and labour are in high demand across the region.

Although both the supply and demand sides of the skilled labour issue are seemingly in place, there are several structural issues which create barriers to the development of skilled workers:

- Competitive issues have caused companies and skills to be more specialised. This means that the number of organisations able to offer a range of training to young people is lessening.
- Pricing efficiencies from main contractors and developers result in lengthy supply chains and short-term contracts.
- An unclear or uncertain pipeline of work creates instability for workers in the sector.
- Almost 35% of the sector workforce is self-employed, so have little time / funding to commit to upskilling or supporting new entrants.

Across Greater Manchester there are c85,000 workers in the Construction sector, of which roughly one third are self-employed. As a rule, the labour market is varied, inter-connected and flexible in terms of working patterns. There is a high amount of both agency labour and self-employment within the sector, for different reasons. Company size range from tens of thousands of self-employed workers and micro businesses to large contractors who employ hundreds of individuals. The project-based nature of the sector has driven many individuals and companies to become hyper-specialised. As an example, employers reported that although a joinery firm may be able to perform a variety of different tasks, they would often specialise in just one e.g. staircases, furniture fitting.

The sector also reports an ageing workforce, with a 40% increase in workers aged over 50 years between 2005 and 2020. Whilst this isn't necessarily a problem; it could be a sign of a healthier workforce and increased job quality, the sustained depression of intake of workers aged 16-24 years old is concerning. Once the ageing workforce approaches retirement, there will be fewer employees ready to take up senior positions. This is where this package of support can address some of these challenges, in creating a pipeline of talent, upskilling the current workforce to ensure that these future roles and gaps can be filled.

Construction is often cited as seeing the worst skills and labour gaps when compared to other industries. Part of the ongoing skills issue is due to the make-up of the business stock, with a large proportion of the workforce being self-employed or part of a micro business with a few employees. Small employers are less likely to spend on skills development than larger employees⁴, with both cost and time being cited as the biggest barriers to accessing skills provision. There is a clear demand for accessible training courses within the sector that look to upskill workers within a short timeframe.

Work carried out by CITB, and Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce (GMCC) has forecasted that labour demand will hit a peak in February 2022 with the expected demand for roles differing by occupational group, with Mechanical and Electrical occupations seeing the highest requirement. The expected demand differs by occupational group, with Mechanical

⁴ [LSBS 2019 employers.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

and Electrical occupations seeing the highest requirement. This supports the idea that increased electrification and changes to heating, ventilation and air conditioning trades driven by the low carbon ambitions are creating further demand in the sector for roles related to these occupations. Significant increase in requirements for exterior trades (such as bricklaying and scaffolding) and ancillary support (such as architects and project managers) are also cited.

As with all sectors, construction has been undergoing a digital transformation for the past decade or two. Use of digital technology has seen a mixed take-up across the sector. Particular areas where digital skills are of increasing importance are in Building Information Modelling (BIM) and the use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS). Modern courses in construction at levels 3+ will often include some element of BIM as part of the course however, upskilling tradespeople with increased knowledge of both BIM and GIS will be key to ensuring workers in the sector can keep pace with the rapid increase in the use of digital programmes and software.

Employers identified the following occupations would be a particular priority for upskilling within the sector. These roles should be targeted as part of the skills package and training strands set out in section 6 below:

- Site Trade roles (including scaffolders, electricians, carpenters, joiners) and Site Advanced roles (including site management, network engineers, electrical engineers, plant operators) – under training strand 1.
- Professional / Ancillary Support roles (including estimators, planners, civil engineers, network designers) and Professional Service roles (including HR, accountancy, project management) – under training strand 2.
- Roles which will benefit from increased knowledge and understanding of BIM and GIS methods and software – under training strand 3.

As we recognise there is sector specific expertise needed to develop specialised training, we are leaving a level of flexibility for providers in designing and delivering aspects of the skills package set out below.

6. Scope, Design and Delivery – Construction and Infrastructure Skills

This skills specification responds to the recommendations set out in the Industry Labour Market and Skills Intelligence Report for Construction. This training will start to develop clear career pathways to support staff and help equip employees to meet the skills need regionally.

All training elements should take into account the following key principles:

- We expect to see **strong employer involvement**. Training should be designed by or with employers to ensure that the training is relevant to employer need.
- Training should be **appropriate for businesses of all sizes** (and their employees) and this should be reflected in the design of the marketing and training delivery model.
- Training should be **accredited where that is important to employers**. Where there is no formal qualification requirement for the proposed training, evidence should be submitted to demonstrate the competence the learner will achieve and what evidence the learner needs to demonstrate the competencies developed.
- Training will be targeted at **upskilling individuals** that are currently employed, some of which will hold existing qualifications.
- As different parts of this training are aimed at individuals with varying levels of experience, the provider will **design training around these needs** and consider what is appropriate for the different cohorts targeted. This may include additional wrap

around support to ensure learners are ready for the training strands and post training support to aid progressions.

- As this training is aimed at individuals that are in-work across a range of sectors and occupations we expect to see **flexible delivery models**. Consortia should be creative about the duration of courses, intensity, place/mode of delivery to best meet the needs of candidates with differing circumstances & recruiting employers.
- It is expected that a **blended approach to delivery** will be suggested by applicants and this should be designed around learner needs and focused on **removing barriers to engagement** and providing flexibility and building in COVID restrictions.
- Bids should show awareness of **inclusivity, accessibility**, and the importance of **diversity** in the way their training will be delivered.
- All delivery should show aspects of helping the individual **embed their learning back into their organisation** through activities like workplace projects.
- The successful organisation will be expected to **generate referrals into their programme** to achieve the numbers set out in the Critical Success Factors, by engaging with the SME Support provider, GM Businesses, employed individuals as well as various other referral routes as identified in Annex 5 – ESF Skills for Growth outline.
- Linked to the above it is expected that the successful applicant will make their **own links with employers** and be able to provide existing evidence of links/partnerships to strengthen their delivery from the outset
- **Progression is critical** and therefore makes up a key part of the critical success factors outlined in section 7 Providers will be expected to show how they will support that transition e.g. mentoring, supporting employers with onboarding etc.
- The successful applicant will be expected to carry out specific marketing and outreach activity to generate interest from the different groups which need to be targeted. This will likely involve **proactively running targeted activities and events** to reach the appropriate audiences and promote the importance of skills development.
- It will be expected that the successful applicant will continue to **share learning with the Programme Office through regular meetings and engagement** to ensure learning from this package continues to develop understanding around high quality skills delivery and supports GMCA in delivering wider skills plans.
- It is expected that applicants will **consider existing national and GM initiatives** to prevent duplication and to ensure training meets the needs of the sector.
- As there is a great need to support our skills system to understand how to improve the perception of working in this sector, it is expected that a significant amount of social value will be around **influencing careers and inspiration activity**.
- Training must be delivered in a way which is suitable for the needs of the sector. Backfill / agency costs to cover staff training can be prohibitive and so providers should be aware of best methods of delivery.

There will be various elements to the upskilling training, all awarded to one lead provider for this package. However, GMCA strongly encourages innovative models which encourage collaboration and partnerships with specialist training providers.

It is expected that applicants will have read and understood the Industry Labour Market and Skills Intelligence Report for Construction and Infrastructure as part of responding to this bid. Applicants will also have clear industry insight into the needs of employers over and above the content of the report to add value to this specification.

There are multiple training skills needed across the sector. These should contribute towards more efficient and integrated working models as well as achieving wider sector aims of better recruitment and improved retention. Specific skill needs identified by employers in the sector

are listed further below and should be included within the training package. Training should be particularly aiming to:

- Equip people with the right competencies to enable them to feel confident about delivering their work and being aware of their potential progression pathways.
- Allow people to take more responsibility in their roles and have a better understanding about how their career may develop.
- Strengthen pathways and help employees feel confident to access higher level qualifications.
- Equip individuals with skills, training and knowledge to enable progression to higher level / salaried roles within the sector.

Training suggested below should be included in any specification. However, this list isn't comprehensive, and providers are encouraged to be innovative within each strand in meeting skill needs identified by the sector. Minimum numbers are those we would expect to see undertake this training module

Training Strand 1: Upskilling Multi-trades

Training Strand 2: Construction Business Management

Training Strand 3: Digital Transformation

Training Strand 1: Upskilling Multi-trades	
Objective	<p>Training delivered under this strand should provide individuals with additional skills and / or qualifications that will allow them to access additional work (if self-employed) and / or progress within their career by gaining new skills, knowledge and competencies.</p> <p>Packages of training can be targeted at both employed and self-employed individuals wanting to broaden their skillset.</p> <p>Training that enables individuals to gain licences / certificates in order to be able to use different types of equipment and machinery within their role can also be included.</p> <p>For example, data from the CITB indicates that programmes in the following areas are in high demand in Greater Manchester:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant Certifications – i.e. Ride on Roller, Dumpers, Excavators • Wider qualifications in other trades – Tradespeople learning supporting skills i.e. plastering for electricians, interior fit-out for plumbers, asbestos awareness for all etc. • Various vocational qualifications – including L3-L6 elements useful for trades like health and safety, temp. works coordination, detection of buried services. • Training to support tradespeople to upskill in mechanical/electrical – i.e. Electrical Fundamentals, Inspection/Testing, Renewables Installation
Accreditation	Where possible, there should be accreditation or professional recognition for each training module (including points towards industry recognised status where applicable). These may be modular elements of existing qualifications and able to be used as accredited prior learning towards other qualifications.

	The individual should have evidence to show new competencies and skills gained through the training. Training providers should be aware of how this package can complement and enhance existing and certified training.
Suggested Programme Model	There is no fixed programme model – design of this is left up to the applicant based on their industry knowledge and understanding. Evidence suggests that short courses are generally preferred within the sector and bidders should take this into account when designing programmes.
Who is this training aimed at?	Individuals working in the construction sector, including self-employed individuals and in particular those working in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Trade Roles – including scaffolders, electricians, carpenters, joiners. • Site Advanced Roles – including site management, network engineers, electrical engineers, plant operators.
Volumes*	A minimum of 600 individuals to complete this training strand.

Training Strand 2: Construction Business Management

Objective	This training strand is concerned with upskilling employees in the construction sector who work in professional services / ancillary / management roles in order to gain new skills and competencies to enhance career progression and / or access higher levels of learning. Self-employed individuals who wish to upskill in order to make their business processes more efficient (for example accessing training with regards to finance and accounting skills, social media in a professional context, project management modules) can also access training under this strand.
Accreditation	Where possible, there should be accreditation or professional recognition for each training module (including points towards industry recognised status where applicable). These may be modular elements of existing qualifications and able to be used as accredited prior learning towards other qualifications. The individual should have evidence to show new competencies and skills gained through the training. Training providers should be aware of how this package can complement and enhance existing and certified training.
Suggested Programme Model	There is no fixed programme model – design of this is left up to the applicant based on their industry knowledge and understanding. Evidence suggests that short courses are generally preferred within the sector and bidders should take this into account when designing programmes.
Who is this training aimed at?	Individuals working in the construction sector, including self-employed individuals and those working in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Services Roles – including HR, accountancy, project management.
Volumes*	A minimum of 350 individuals to complete this training strand.

Training Strand 3: Digital Transformation	
Objective	<p>This training strand is around upskilling individuals working in the sector with some of the technical skills and knowledge, including technical language, associated with the digitalisation within the sector.</p> <p>Training can be targeted at individuals from different occupations and roles across the sector and should consist of modules which support individuals to be able to use sector specific software, such as scheduling or planning software, BIM and / or GIS methods for the purpose of progressing within their career and / or onto higher levels of learning.</p> <p>This programme may take a form of different modules to address different skills needs for different individuals and employers.</p> <p>Training should be relevant to the learners' role and employer needs where possible and should be specific to the construction sector.</p>
Accreditation	<p>Where possible, there should be accreditation or professional recognition for each training module (including points towards industry recognised status where applicable). These may be modular elements of existing qualifications and able to be used as accredited prior learning towards other qualifications.</p> <p>The individual should have evidence to show new competencies and skills gained through the training. Training providers should be aware of how this package can complement and enhance existing and certified training.</p>
Suggested Programme Model	<p>There is no fixed programme model – design of this is left up to the applicant based on their industry knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>Evidence suggests that short courses are generally preferred within the sector and bidders should take this into account when designing programmes.</p>
Who is this training aimed at?	<p>Individuals working in the construction sector, including self-employed individuals and in particular those working in roles which will benefit from increased knowledge and understanding of sector specific software to keep up with digital innovation and digitalisation in the sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional / Ancillary Support Roles – including estimators, planners, civil engineers, network designers.
Volumes*	A minimum 50 individuals to complete this training strand.

*Please note although the minimum volumes under each training strand have been set out in this specification, GMCA reserve the right to increase these should evidence and demand emerge that higher volumes are needed. In this occurrence GMCA will use the contract extension allowances as set out in section 9 to increase the contract value in line with the higher profiles and agree this with the successful provider.

7. Critical Success Factors

The **critical success factors** and targets associated with this programme are listed below and would be seen as the **minimum requirements** for successful delivery.

- As outlined in section 6:

- **A minimum of 600 individuals to complete Training Strand 1** (Upskilling Multi-trades).
- **A minimum of 350 individuals to complete Training Strand 2** (Construction Business Management).
- **A minimum of 50 individuals to complete Training Strand 3** (Digital Transformation)
- A minimum of 50% of all individuals to progress, as per [ESF outcome definitions](#):
 - R7 – Individuals gaining level 3 or above or a unit of a level 3 or above qualification
 - R8 – Employed individuals gaining an improved labour market status
- Whilst it is accepted that in some cases reaching these target groups may not be possible, the successful provider must be able to demonstrate how it will make an ongoing effort to reach the minimum target groups for individuals, as per ESF definitions:
 - 54% of individuals to be female
 - 17% of individuals over 50 years of age
 - 20% of individuals from ethnic minorities
 - 10% of individuals with disabilities
 - 5% of individuals from a single adult household with dependent children.
- The proposed delivery model and engagement should reflect the priority groups and ensure equality and accessibility to this sector.
- All outputs must be **compliant with ESF funding** requirements and claims. A draft provider guidance will be provided on award of contract.
- Monthly **qualitative and quantitative** reporting to GMCA to monitor performance and compliance. The qualitative data will also support the intelligence gathering and future skills commissioning on the programme.
- A clear **marketing and engagement** strategy that should:
 - Outline how you will target the priority groups outlined above.
 - Set out how you will work with various partners across the Manufacturing sector. Promoting and engaging individuals and businesses in the programme (GMCA has already engaged with many partners to inform this commissioning, therefore the successful provider will be expected to engage with some of these key stakeholders, including the existing skills ecosystem itself, as well as continuing to build their own stakeholder network and referral routes).
 - Produce a minimum of 1 case study each month, to be signed off by GMCA Programme Office and made available for sharing more widely to promote the programme.

8. Reporting

To meet ESF standards as set out in section 4 & 7 as well as GMCA requirements, we will expect to see:

- Clear reporting built into the programme at intervals in line with the payment model.
- Reporting which meets ESF requirements.
- Reporting against outputs outlined in payment model to the programme office on a monthly basis, in order to make the claims as per the payment model.
- Clear stakeholder engagement with regular engagement and reporting of delivery across GM.

- Continuous Evaluation: as part of the model the Skills provider will be expected to evaluate the support they have provided to the individuals and gather feedback that informs future delivery to improve their service. As part of both the evaluation work and comms, case studies and examples will be expected at regular intervals.
- Programme evaluation: GMCA has appointed York Consulting as our evaluation partner to evaluate the programme in its entirety, therefore the Skills provider will need to work with the evaluator and report the required information. All individuals will be asked to give consent for the evaluation partner to contact them and will need to do this in order to access the programme.

9. Timescale

Delivery is expected to start no later than end of January 2022, enrolments must finish by end of March 2023, all contract activity and support must conclude by the end of September 2023.

Bidders are expected to complete the financial template at Appendix A to profile their activity over the duration of the contract. We expect a significant proportion of enrolments to happen before October 2022.

Exceptional performance may result in discussions around extension option being implemented. In this instance GMCA will use the ongoing reports to monitor and agree with the provider any extensions to volumes available.

10. Budget

The maximum budget for this package is £1.2 million. The bidder is expected to complete the financial template as provided to break this down into the above training strands in line with the below payment model.

11. Payment Model

The payment model for this programme is payment for results, however an upfront service fee has also been made available to assist with mobilisation and delivery costs. Bidders are asked to read and submit the financial template where they can submit their own intended volumes and unit prices per strand. The critical success factors set out in section 7 above are the **minimum** volumes expected.

Service fee

As this commission is an innovative model, we are anticipating the provider who is delivering will need to complete some upfront development work on the package and will therefore make a maximum of 30% contract value available as an upfront service fee, this is inclusive of the £1.2m available. The service fee has been designed to help with the development work and mobilisation of the contracts, ensuring quality can be delivered without some of the constraints of a purely payment by results model. The service fee is not a management fee.

The service fee can be drawn down every quarter following contract award at a maximum of 30% per quarter (a maximum of £60,000 per quarter) for 6 full quarters. First payment will be made on contract award, following this a quarterly contract review will take place and service fee will only be payable upon performance being satisfactory. GMCA reserve the right to withhold the service fee in the event of performance being lower than 80% cumulative, across

all critical success factors, which will also trigger the performance management framework as set out in Annex 2.

Payment for results

The remaining 70% of the payments will be paid upon successful completion and verification of claims to the programme office on a monthly basis. Claims can be made **per individual** at the following points:

- **Enrolment – 10%**
- **Completion – 50%**
- **Progression in qualification or in work – 40%**
 - **Progression in qualification** – (As per ESF definition: R7 – Individuals gaining level 3 or above or a unit of a level 3 or above qualification, where training is non accredited L3 equivalence will need to be evidenced)
 - **Progression in work** – (As per ESF definition: R8 – Employed individuals gaining an improved labour market status, this does not just apply to females on this contract.)

The bidder must provide a monthly forecast profile of the volumes they intend to complete, using the financial template provided, a minimum of 2000 individuals must complete their skills package (as broken down into strands in section 6) – with performance against this profile monitored by GMCA, in line with GMCA's performance management framework as set out in Annex 2.

The successful organisation will be paid monthly in arrears for results at a fixed unit cost per unit as specified in the provider's financial submission. Monthly payment will vary dependent on actual performance achieved. Payment will be based on the submission of an invoice with supporting evidence.

For all payment components GMCA will undertake validation against both contractual and ESF requirements of provider evidence (financial and individual records) prior to releasing payment within our 30-day payment terms.

12. Performance requirements

The provider will be required to report performance to GMCA monthly. GMCA will also build in quarterly review points in line with the service fee payment points to assess the delivery and performance and reporting requirements.

The aim is to ensure the Provider meets the performance levels that make up the critical success factors and targets listed within this specification (listed within section 7 of this document). This will be monitored through activities such as the monthly performance report, six monthly review, audits, and monthly claim.

The critical success factors, targets and ESF requirements will be referred to in the performance management framework as Minimum Service Delivery Standards (MSDS) and where required the Programme Office will take formal actions against the Provider, where they do not meet such performance levels and MSDS.

Further detail regarding the performance management framework and levels of performance management can be found in the Skills Delivery Provider Guidance.

13. Data collection & GM Individual Tracker (GMIT)

As part of the wider programme GMCA has designed and procured an individual tracker system which the provider will be required to use to manage their claims and performance submissions monthly to the GMCA Programme Office.

The GMIT system is a bespoke built system commissioned for the purpose of Skills for Growth programme delivery.

The system uses a cloud-based AWS server hosting the database. For security the server will be fully encrypted, password and user protected with automated alerts to identify unauthorised system access.

The aim of the system is to create a centralised database that all skills delivery providers will input the data information regarding each individual to generate the individual record of the participant accessing the provision of learning.

The Programme office will access the GMIT system to verify individual information from the skills delivery provider to enable the monthly payment for services/ provision to be made.

GMCA will need to make claims on a quarterly basis to ESF and this will include anonymised individual information. The GMIT system will generate these reports for ESF to make the claim and generate the necessary documentation and reports for ESF inspection.

GMCA require the system in place to track the individual through the programme and to support the generation of reports of performance in line with ESF outputs. Which will enable GMCA to monitor the success of the programme, skills delivery provision and have a constant overview of delivery and performance.

The functionality of the GMIT system, reporting and data within the system will be of benefit and support to the provider within their own operational delivery of the contract.

The system will be used to audit the skills delivery provider to check quality and compliance of individual records. The system will allow for ease of access from the GMCA Programme office for spot checks and notified audits/ inspections.

GMCA have designed the system with providers in mind using data items from ESF requirements and similar large-scale programmes.

It is required that the GMIT system can “talk” to the skills delivery provider’s CRM system to populate information within the system.

If the skills delivery provider cannot enable this “talk” or does not have a CRM system in place, manually inputting to the GMIT system will be required.

Although the GMIT system is in the early phase of design and implementation we expect the successful provider to use the GMIT system on award of contract from day one delivery to submit claims and performance data.

On award of this contract the provider’s IT systems and team will need to work alongside the GMIT software provider to ensure compatibility of systems.

GMCA will provide full guidance, log ins/licenses and user training to access the system and bear all costs on behalf of the provider.

The GMIT provider has a service/help desk resource to support the provider and GMCA with errors and troubleshooting issues to ensure that the system maintains functionality and does not impact on delivery or monthly claims being made timely.

GMCA asks the providers to work collaboratively with GMCA and the GMIT software provider to develop the newly implemented system, including and not limited to feedback on functionality, user experience and bug fixes.

The provider will be actively encouraged to participate in meetings with GMCA and the GMIT software provider to move the system forward in its development.

The GMIT system will be within early use stage on award of contract. The provider can expect over the course of the initial 3-6 months for further functions and design requirements specified by GMCA to be implemented. At each update and development stage GMCA will ensure the skills delivery provider is notified and communicated on these updates.

14. Monitoring and compliance

The GMIT system will be the key reporting mechanism for all individual activity, evaluation and compliance. This will be completed by the provider and be used by the GMCA Programme Office and the appointed evaluation partner to monitor performance and assess the impact of the programme. A draft copy of the data set can be found in Annex 1. This is an example of the minimum data we will require but is not the definitive list, provider will be expected to work with GMCA to develop the final working version.

The GMCA Programme Office will undertake regular verification and compliance visits to test systems, processes and compliance against both contractual and ESF requirements.

This will include the sampling of the individual records (paper or electronic) via GMIT. This includes eligibility, detailed plans being completed, evidence of follow ups, supporting evidence to verify outputs and outcomes and all other delivery standards required to ensure compliance across all aspects of the contract.

The GMCA Programme Office will undertake regular sampling to ensure claims made, based on monthly submissions, meet the contractual requirements.

The Provider is expected to have the necessary remote IT infrastructure to enable GMCA to carry out centralised checks of the Provider's systems.

The sample of records to check will be selected randomly using a method chosen by GMCA Programme Office (% to be confirmed at contract award). The frequency and size of the samples may change throughout the contract period. All issues arising from compliance checks will be reported to the Provider. Contract review meetings with GMCA Programme Office will include discussions around compliance issues.

The Provider must permit access to all relevant documentation (paper or electronic) in relation to the provision for inspection and audit by the GMCA Programme Office Team.

The provider is required to maintain a robust system of internal control which must include appropriate checks, monitoring arrangements and adequate records to demonstrate that you are entitled to make the claim. The records maintained need to be sufficient not only to support a claim for the outcome, but also to allow internal management checks and scrutiny from other external bodies - including the ESF Managing Authority.

The provider is required to make this evidence available for testing by the GMCA Programme Office and other external bodies when requested, and it must be retained in line with the [ESF Operational Programme 2014-20 Guidance](#).

The GMCA Programme Office may undertake additional checks to complement those listed above by looking more in depth at individual cases. The checks will seek assurance that the Provider is addressing the business needs and requirements, and to test that the approach is in line with the Contract.

The GMCA Programme Office may also undertake "deep dives" into specific areas to

understand where there are specific areas of weakness. This includes using Open Book Accounting.

The Provider will be expected to participate in both regular performance management and quality meetings. The meetings will be conducted in the spirit of co-design for the purpose of continuous improvement, but the commissioners reserve the right to terminate the contract, in line with GMCA performance and management framework, if performance is consistently low.

Open Book Accounting

GMCA reserves the right to use Open Book Accounting to review the financial operations of the successful provider in delivering the service.

As part of the Cabinet Office Guidance on Open Book Contract Management in Public Sector Contracts, there will be a six-monthly Contract Review between the supplier and GMCA Finance and Operational leads.

Open Book Contract Management is a structured process for the sharing and management of costs and operational and performance data between the Provider and GMCA. The aim is to promote collaborative sharing of data between parties as part of financial transparency. The outcomes should be a fair price for the Provider, value for money for GMCA and performance improvement for both parties over the life of the Contract.

15. Organisational Experience

The Provider must ensure and be able to demonstrate that the employees with responsibility for delivering any element of the provision have experience, skills and, where appropriate, qualifications that are relevant to the type and scale of the provision offered.

The Provider must ensure and be able to demonstrate that the management structure is of sufficient size, is organised appropriately and is supported by administrative systems and any other infrastructure necessary to effectively manage and deliver the provision from the implementation phase of the contract.

The Provider must have the capacity to operate flexibly, responding to emerging evidence as the programme progresses.

The Provider must provide recruitment plans at regular intervals. The Provider must immediately inform the Programme Office of any staff absences with mitigation plans that will impact on the delivery of the programme.

The provider is expected to comply with GMCA's values and standards as described in Annex 4.

16. Evaluation

GMCA has appointed York Consulting as our external evaluation partner to evaluate the Programme in its entirety. There will be data collection and data sharing requirements for the skills provider associated with supporting the performance monitoring and evaluation activities. The provider will be expected to gain individuals consent to be contacted by the evaluation partner for reasons outlined below.

The skills provider will be expected to evaluate the support they have provided to the individual and gather feedback that informs future delivery to improve their service. This will be carried

out as part of both the evaluation work and comms case studies, and examples will be expected at regular intervals.

The service evaluation of the skills provider is a crucial element of the programme and therefore all individuals must agree to take part in the evaluation to access support from the service. The programme will operate a test and learn approach to determine whether the provision makes a tangible difference with the target population group, using a robust evaluation methodology. The service evaluation will be used to inform and influence decisions made by policy makers and commissioners when funding, designing and delivering similar programmes and services both in GM and nationally.

The Provider will be required to share qualitative and quantitative performance monitoring and evaluation data (including individual data, case studies and completed evaluation questionnaires) on an agreed basis with both the GMCA Programme Office and the Evaluation Partner. This will form a requirement of the Programme Contract and the Provider will be expected to implement the required transparency process as provided by the GMCA Programme Office to support this.

The Provider will be expected to have data protection legislation compliant systems and processes in place to support this. A detailed specification of data requirements will be provided by the Evaluation Partner. The broader quantitative performance management framework requirements will also include the monitoring and reporting of the agreed Social Value performance measures. The schedule for submission will be decided upon contract award.

The Provider will be expected to work closely with the Evaluation Partner and input management and staff time into data collection to support evaluation activities intended to capture lessons learned from the project. The Evaluation Partner may wish to interview the Provider, its sub-contractors/supply chain, and the individuals involved in the service provision, where the Provider may be asked to provide the relevant contact details. In order to facilitate this process, the Provider should seek advance agreement from delivery staff, sub-contractors and individuals to take part in evaluation activities. Advance notice will be given where the Provider's co-operation is required. The Provider will also be expected to record where individuals have agreed to be part of the evaluation and to implement the transparency process as provided in relation to the evaluation.

As part of the 'test and learn' approach, the Provider will be required to be flexible and alter aspects of the data collection procedures for monitoring and evaluation initially specified in the contract based on any new evidence regarding which approaches work best. The Provider will be required to take part in a bi-annual review process with the GMCA and Evaluation Partner to identify whether the existing performance monitoring and evaluation procedures are meeting the relevant objectives, and to implement any changes recommended as a result of this review process.

The Provider is required to have flexible systems and processes for performance monitoring that will allow for more data fields to be added should such a requirement arise as the project matures.

17. Governance and reporting

The accountability for the contract will be the responsibility of the GMCA Executive and will also report to the GM Employment and Skills Advisory Panel. Performance and evaluation reports will also be shared with European Social Fund and Department for Education.

A monthly performance review will be established between GMCA and the Provider with the purpose being to review delivery, performance, issues and risks.

A quarterly Skills for Growth provider forum will also be set up by GMCA in order for the various providers delivering under the skills delivery element of the Programme to share updates on their delivery, GMCA to update on the wider Programme and create an environment where best practice can be shared.

18. Marketing and Communications

The Provider will be responsible for the production of all marketing and communications materials. These must adhere to the branding guidelines which will be supplied to the Provider, with particular importance on the [ESF Branding requirements](#). There will be a requirement for all marketing materials to be signed off by the GMCA Programme Office prior to them being used.

The Provider will be expected to engage in regular campaigns with GMCA and other providers delivering in this programme. This will involve producing case studies and marketing materials upon request to promote the wider programme.

The Provider will be required to produce hard copies of relevant materials (e.g. leaflets, flyers advertising the project and others as required).

The GMCA Programme Office should immediately be notified of any media enquires relating to the programme. The GMCA Programme Office will take the lead in coordinating responses, however the Provider will be required to input into these responses where required by the GMCA Programme Office.

19. Information Governance

Information Governance requirements are laid out in Annex 3.