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Contents

1. [Action: adult education budget \(AEB\) devolution, learner eligibility using postcode data](#)
2. [Information: how to express an interest to deliver T Levels from 2022 to 2023](#)
3. [Information: apprenticeship service for small and medium employers is now open](#)
4. [Information: the apprenticeship technical funding guide has been updated](#)
5. [Information: qualification achievement rates \(QAR\)](#)
6. [Information: the next stage of the Fire It Up](#)

1. Action: adult education budget (AEB) devolution, learner eligibility using postcode data

All providers are reminded that from 1 August 2019, the adult education budget (AEB) is apportioned between the ESFA and 6 mayoral combined authorities (MCA's) and the Greater London Authority (GLA). ESFA is no longer responsible for administering the AEB in the MCA/GLA devolved areas.

It is the responsibility of each provider to ensure that appropriate funding agreements are in place with the relevant funding body, ESFA or devolved authorities (MCA/GLA), before they enrol a learner and claim AEB funding. Providers must also make sure that an individual is eligible before claiming funding. Providers can check which funding body is responsible for funding the learner using the [devolution postcode data set](#).

Providers should not assume that their funding (ILR) claim will be paid unless they

apprenticeships
campaign is now live

7. Information: consultation on lifting the inspection exemption for outstanding schools, colleges and other organisations
8. Your feedback: we would welcome your feedback on a new online form to report extremism concerns

have a funding agreement in place with responsible funding authority (ESFA/MCA/GLA) and the learner satisfies the relevant eligibility requirements.

[For further information on devolution](#) see the published guidance.

2. Information: how to express an interest to deliver T Levels from 2022 to 2023

The Department for Education (DfE) is looking to identify the next tranche of providers to deliver T Levels from the 2022 to 2023 academic year.

The expression of interest went live on 9 January. Providers wishing to express an interest will be required to complete and submit an expression of interest to ESFA, by midnight on Friday 28 February 2020.

To complete the expression of interest providers need to be registered with [DfE sign-in](#).

[Further information and guidance](#) is available on GOV.UK.

3. Information: apprenticeship service for small and medium employers is now open

Smaller employers, who do not pay the apprenticeship levy, now have full access to the apprenticeship service.

The service is now open for those employers who feel ready to use the service giving greater control over choosing their apprenticeship, as well as their training provider and enabling access to funding and the range of other benefits the service offers. This follows [our announcement in October 2019 that we would be embarking on a managed transition](#) to allow smaller employers who do not pay the apprenticeship levy to access the benefits of the service.

[Registration to use the service](#) is now open.

We want employers and training providers to have time to prepare and take full advantage of the move onto the service, at the same time ensuring stability in the marketplace. So, from now until March the transition period will start with an initial 'test phase'. We will seek feedback from smaller employers who register and recruit through the service and from providers working with those employers and

we will monitor how the system is working, keeping under review how the reservation policy is working.

We also announced that to support transition additional funding would be made available for up to 5,000 new starts through the service, per month, between January and March 2020. If selected by a smaller employer access to the additional funding is open to all main providers that remain listed on the register of apprenticeship training providers (RoATP), not just those with an existing procured non-levy contract.

As we enable smaller employers to use the apprenticeship service, we are introducing the ability for them to reserve funds for training. We have published updated versions of the [funding rules](#) and a new [reservations policy statement](#).

This will allow us to forecast, monitor and manage apprenticeships funding within the overall budget for apprenticeships. To manage a gradual transition from contracted training provision to employers arranging their own apprenticeships through the apprenticeship service, employers will initially be able to reserve funding for up to three apprenticeships. Employers will still be able to access training via existing procured non-levy contracts, and we will extend these contracts beyond March 2020 to help facilitate a managed transition during the year. as we bring all smaller employers onto the apprenticeship service.

We have [written to all existing providers](#) about how the changes will affect contracting arrangements. This includes details of change to [provider](#) and [employer](#) agreements.

Following the [series of webinars we held in November](#), we are running more webinars throughout January to provide more detail on the planned arrangements and address the questions submitted at the end of the last series. You can [register to join online](#).

4. Information: the apprenticeship technical funding guide has been updated

We have published version 3 of the [apprenticeships technical funding guide for April 2019 to July 2020](#).

This explains how funding will work for apprenticeship frameworks and standards starting on or after 1 April 2019, including how we will calculate provider payments.

The update from the previous guidance is some clarifications around reservations for new non-levy starts on the apprenticeship service.

For further information please email sde.servicedesk@education.gov.uk.

5. Information: qualification achievement rates (QAR)

QARs will continue to be published in March 2020 through the National Achievement Rate tables. However, the new transparency reporting table will be published alongside [NARTs transparency tables](#) at the same time. Please read this document alongside the 2018 to 2019 QAR [business rules and the technical specification](#) to review your QAR data.

We have also published the following documents on the [QAR webpage](#):

- QAR business rules 2019 to 2020
- Technical specification 2018 to 2019 (version 3)
- Data extract guidance (version 3)
- Transparency reporting plans for 2018 to 2019

5.1 2018 to 2019 QAR provisional data is now live

We have published your provisional QAR 2018 to 2019 data. All the data is available through the [View Your Education Data](#) portal. There will no longer be any data available on the Hub.

You have until 5pm on Friday 31 January to inform us of any concerns about how we have implemented our published methodology. Please note that you cannot request fixes or adjustments to your 2018 to 2019 individualised learner record (ILR) data.

If you have any queries with the provisional data, please complete a [data query form](#), email this to sde.servicedesk@education.gov.uk the service desk and ask us to assign your query to 'ESFA Business Operations QAR'.

For further information, refer to the [QAR guidance](#).

6. Information: the next stage of the Fire It Up apprenticeships campaign is now live

On 1 January, the next push for Fire It Up launched with advertising appearing across TV, out of home poster sites, cinema, video on demand, social and digital channels.

We would welcome your support in promoting the campaign by using our

[campaign toolkit](#):

1. Post social media content – using @FireItUp_Apps #FireItUp
2. Share case studies of your apprentices/apprenticeship programme on your own channels
3. Post your apprenticeship vacancies on Find An Apprenticeship

For this phase we are partnering with owner of SB:TV, Jamal Edwards MBE, alongside Spotify and The Guardian.

We have produced a series of short films featuring apprentices working alongside Jamal to record a [music track](#) produced specifically for apprenticeships and a series of Spotify playlist adverts, which go live from 15 January. Among other content for The Guardian, we also produced a 'Weekend' magazine cover wrap which went live on Saturday 11 January 2019.

For more information about how to get involved, check out our [campaign toolkit](#).

7. Information: consultation on lifting the inspection exemption for outstanding schools, colleges and other organisations

Last autumn DfE announced proposals to lift the exemption from routine inspection for outstanding schools, colleges and other organisations delivering publicly-funded education and training.

This will help to give parents, students and employers a clearer picture of the standard of schools, colleges and other organisations in their area, and support these institutions to continue improving.

The [consultation on lifting the inspection exemption for outstanding schools, colleges and other organisations](#) is now live. The consultation closes on Monday 24 February 2019.

8. Your feedback: we would welcome your feedback on a new online form to report extremism concerns

As part of our work to help the education sector raise any matters or concerns that arise on extremism, we would like to speak to the sector to receive their feedback

on a new online form.

DfE offer a service for anyone to report a concern relating to extremism within an educational environment using email or phone. We are currently working on an online form as an additional anonymous method to use the service. To ensure that the form is intuitive and easy to use, we're looking for some volunteers to help us with our research. The research session will consist of you going through a test version of the form.

If you wish to take part in the research, where we will spend 30 to 45 minutes speaking to you on a 1 to 1 basis, either remotely using Skype or during a site visit, please email contact DataScience.USERRESEARCH@education.gov.uk by Friday 31 January 2020.

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