

Correspondence

ESFA Update further education: 15 July 2020

Published 15 July 2020

Contents

1. Latest information on coronavirus (COVID-19)

2. Action: extra funding for free school meals in further education (FE)

3. Action: new subcontractor declaration window – including nil returns

4. Reminder: closing date for 16 to 19 Bursary Fund COVID-19 business cases

5. Information: update to apprenticeships COVID-19 guidance

6. Information: updated apprenticeship funding policy guidance

7. Information: updated apprenticeship funding rules

8. Information: raising on the number of reservations from 3 to 10 on the apprenticeship service

9. Information: revised deadline for providing external assurance on subcontracting controls – return of assurance certificate for 2019 to 2020

10. Information: funding paid and retained for subcontractors

11. Information: the National Careers Service Virtual Jobs Fair returns

12. Information: new support offer for 16 to 17 year olds from the National Citizen Service

1. Latest information on coronavirus (COVID-19)

The Department for Education has published guidance about [COVID-19 in educational settings for staff, parents and carers, pupils and students](#) on GOV.UK.

There is also [guidance on the apprenticeship service about COVID-19](#).

Please check [GOV.UK](#) regularly for updates.

2. Action: extra funding for free school meals in further education (FE)

Due to the unprecedented nature of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, we are providing extra funding to enable FE institutions to continue to provide meals for the 2020 summer holiday. The funding is for students who were [eligible and claiming](#) for free meals in FE in the 2019 to 2020 academic year. Providers will receive £73 per student/instance. This is the free meals rate of £2.41 x 5 meals each week over the 6 week summer holiday period.

Institutions need to confirm arrangements and support with eligible students before the end of the summer term. We will update the [free meals in FE guide](#) to confirm further information and payment details. We will pay the first part of free meals allocations for the 2020 to 2021 academic year to institutions in August in line with the usual payment schedule.

This does not apply to 16 to 19 schools and academies who are able to access the [free school meals national voucher scheme](#).

3. Action: new subcontractor declaration window – including nil returns

Organisations delivering ESFA funded adult programmes, including all apprenticeships and traineeships, and those FE institutions delivering 16 to 19 provision, must declare their subcontracting arrangements by Monday 31 August 2020. Schools and academies are not required to complete this declaration for their 16 to 19 provision.

The declarations relate to the following periods:

- 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 for the delivery of any apprenticeship non-levy and levy funded provision and for

• 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020 for all other adult education

• 16 to 19 programme for the year from 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020 (noting schools and academies are exempt).

Please note If you have submitted a declaration for the referenced 2019/2020 provisions you are required to submit this data for the second and final time. This information should be updated and reconfirmed in line with the funding rules which state we will collect this information at least twice a year.

Please also note that if you do not subcontract but receive direct funding from ESFA, you are still required to make a nil return.

The process for collecting subcontractor declarations is through the [Manage your education and skills funding service \(MYESF\)](#).

You will need one of the following MYESF roles to complete and submit a declaration:

- contract authoriser

• contract manager

• data returns and claims authoriser

You can check the [user roles and permissions in MYESF](#).

If you have any questions, please submit an [ESFA online enquiry form](#).

4. Reminder: closing date for 16 to 19 Bursary Fund COVID-19 business cases

ESFA recognised that some 16 to 19 students from disadvantaged households may not have been able to access their required online learning in the 2019 to 2020 academic year because they lacked a suitable device such as a laptop and/or internet access.

To support providers who may not have had sufficient bursary funds available, either because they are fully committed or fully spent- we have been operating a business case process, as set out in the [16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide](#).

The closing date for business cases is 31 July 2020. We will not consider any business cases submitted after that date.

5. Information: update to apprenticeships COVID-19 guidance

The [apprenticeships coronavirus guidance](#) has been updated to reflect:

- an announcement that a support service for redundant apprentices will be available soon

• information about apprentices returning to onsite course delivery

• confirmation that temporary flexibility suspending the funding rule requiring level 2 apprentices to study towards, and attempt, level 2 functional skills assessments has been extended until 31 December 2020

• improvements to the FAQs

6. Information: updated apprenticeship funding policy guidance

We have published our [2020 to 2021 apprenticeship funding policy guidance](#). It updates the policy that has been in place since 1 April 2019, and reflects the measures announced in the [Chancellor's summer statement](#) on 8 July. It also references changes to the number of reservations available to employers who do not pay the apprenticeship levy and the previously agreed end to starts on apprenticeship frameworks.

7. Information: updated apprenticeship funding rules

The ESFA [apprenticeship funding rules 2020 to 2021](#) (clarification version) are being published on GOV.UK today.

These documents set out the rules for apprenticeship funding, including the evidence required to support it and apply to apprenticeship starts from 1 August 2020.

These rules are being published following the publication of the [August 2020 policy changes](#) and will reflect these changes. They should be read alongside the [apprenticeship response to coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) as some of these flexibilities are continuing.

The changes we have made are detailed in the summary of changes which can be found on the [apprenticeship funding rules](#) page on GOV.UK.

These funding rules are a clarification version to give you the opportunity to provide feedback.

Send any feedback to [fundingrules.comments@education.gov.uk](#) by Thursday 23 July. We will update the rules to reflect any clarifications later in July.

The rules apply to providers, employers and employer-providers receiving apprenticeship funding from ESFA.

8. Information: raising on the number of reservations from 3 to 10 on the apprenticeship service

Employers who do not pay the apprenticeship levy are currently in a transition phase onto the apprenticeship service. We are carefully managing this process as employers move away from contracted training provision to the new system – to help us do this we introduced the reservation process for use by smaller employers; giving smaller employers certainty that funding is in place before they recruit an apprentice.

Eligible employers have been provided with three 'active or used' reservations at any given time. From Wednesday 15 July, we are increasing this to 10 'active or used' reservations per smaller employer account for the remainder of FY20-21. This policy will continue to be kept under review as we further assess how the new system is working.

Until 31 March 2021, smaller employers are also able to continue arranging apprenticeships via training providers with existing Government contracts, subject to provider agreement and the provider having sufficient funds available in their allocation. All new starts will be through the service from 1 April 2021.

You can [read more on GOV.UK](#).

9. Information: revised deadline for providing external assurance on subcontracting controls – return of assurance certificate for 2019 to 2020

In accordance with the funding rules providers are required to obtain an annual report from an external auditor that provides assurance on their arrangements to manage and control their delivery subcontractors. Providers must send a certificate to us each year to confirm this report has been received. Further information is available on the [providing external assurance on subcontracting controls GOV.UK page](#).

The current returns deadline of 31 July 2020 relating to 2019 to 2020 has been extended to 30 September 2020 in light of COVID-19.

Completed certificates should be sent via email to [CF1718.SUBCONTRACTING@education.gov.uk](#). A copy of the report does not need to be sent to ESFA but we may request a copy for compliance purposes. If you have any questions, please use our [online enquiry form](#).

10. Information: funding paid and retained for subcontractors

Our [Update article on 1 April 2020](#) confirmed that in light of COVID-19 we would not be issuing the templates for providers to tell us the actual level of funding paid and retained for each of their delivery subcontractors in 2019 to 2020. However, providers need to make sure that these are published on their website as detailed in the funding rules.

Now that the [government response to the subcontracting consultation](#) has been published we are working to update all funding rules to reflect these reforms.

All providers must make sure when arranging annual audits that the auditors check that providers have published this information on their websites for AEB, ESF and apprenticeships provision in line with the funding rules. Where instances of non-compliance are identified this must be recorded within the report and action plan for providers.

For the delivery years 2017 to 2018 and 2018 to 2019 the template was not issued. We will be seeking assurance through information published on provider websites.

11. Information: the National Careers Service Virtual Jobs Fair returns

The National Careers Service is hosting its next fair from Monday 20 to Friday 24 July to promote local vacancies and support citizens to get back into work. As before, the Virtual Jobs Fair will travel round different regions and give employers the chance to post current opportunities on their social media which the National Careers Service will promote on their channels during #JobsHour.

This month we're asking employers to help bring the event to life and get involved by posting in the online discussions and encouraging job seekers to ask questions about the opportunities. We'll also be hosting another Facebook Live event on Wednesday, this month the focus will be on building up skills and getting the most out of resources such as [The Skills Toolkit](#).

Follow our social media channels [@NationalCareers](#) and [NationalCareersService](#) as we post more details throughout the week. If you have any questions or would like to get involved contact the helpline on 0800 100 900 which is open 7 days a week from 8am until 10pm.

11.1 Timetable

Region	Date	Time
South West and Oxfordshire	Monday 20 July	11am to 12pm
East Midlands and Northamptonshire	Monday 20 July	1pm to 2pm
South East	Tuesday 21 July	11am to 12pm
East of England and Buckinghamshire	Tuesday 21 July	1pm to 2pm
North West	Wednesday 22 July	11am to 12pm
Yorkshire and Humber	Thursday 23 July	11am to 12pm
West Midlands and Staffordshire	Thursday 23 July	1pm to 2pm
London	Friday 24 July	11am to 12pm
North East and Cumbria	Friday 24 July	1pm to 2pm

Virtual Jobs Fair

Timetable

South West & Oxfordshire	Monday 20th July - 11am - 12pm
East Midlands & Northamptonshire	Monday 20th July - 1pm - 2pm
South East	Tuesday 21st July - 11am - 12pm
East of England & Buckinghamshire	Tuesday 21st July - 1pm - 2pm
North West	Wednesday 22nd July - 11am - 12pm
Yorkshire & Humber	Thursday 23rd July - 11am - 12pm
West Midlands & Staffordshire	Thursday 23rd July - 1pm - 2pm
London	Friday 24th July - 11am - 12pm
North East & Cumbria	Friday 24th July - 1pm - 2pm

12. Information: new support offer for 16 to 17 year olds from the National Citizen Service

The NCS (National Citizen Service) will be providing a new support offer for 16 to 17 year olds. FE colleges and schools will be offered a menu of National Citizen Service activities over 2 to 10 days, which can be tailored to support any summer or autumn activities that the college or other provider are leading on as part of their post-COVID-19 re-engagement or induction phases with students.

This will be free to FE colleges and schools and delivered in late summer and throughout autumn. For more information contact the National Citizen Service at [education@ncstrust.org.uk](#).

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance and support

The UK has left the EU

Get ready for new rules in January 2021

Services and information

Benefits

Births, deaths, marriages and care

Business and self-employed

Childcare and parenting

Citizenship and living in the UK

Crime, justice and the law

Disabled people

Driving and transport

Education and learning

Employing people

Environment and countryside

Housing and local services

Money and tax

Passports, travel and living abroad

Visas and immigration

Working, jobs and pensions

Departments and policy

How government works

Departments

Worldwide

Services

Guidance and regulation

News and communications

Research and statistics

Policy papers and consultations

Transparency and freedom of information releases