



Correspondence

ESFA Update academies: 26 June 2019

Published 26 June 2019

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1. Action: budget forecast return 3 year

The budget forecast return 3 year (BFR3Y) is now live for users to complete their trust's return by Tuesday 30 July 2019. For help completing the return, please see our [BFR3Y guidance](#).

The [online form](#) is now open and ready for you to begin filling in the return. We would recommend accessing the form early.

If you're struggling to access the form please read the [registration guidance](#).

We will be hosting Skype dial-in sessions every Wednesday at 1pm to answer questions about the return or workbook. Joining instructions are on the [BFR page](#).

We would like to remind trusts that that the BFR3Y is in scope of ESFA's policy on publishing the names of any academy trusts who are late, or do not submit, two or more financial returns in each academic year. We strongly recommend all users allow enough time for all checks to be completed and approved by the deadline of Tuesday 30 July 2019.

2. Information: academies phishing alert

We are aware of an increase in reports of cyber-attacks against education providers, which indicates a concerted and targeted attack on educational institutions. These attacks have resulted in financial losses to those that fall victim.

Recent intelligence suggests a sophisticated phishing technique has been used to gain entry to education providers' email systems.

The technique uses the title of a genuine email that the user has recently replied to in order to trick them into believing it is authentic. The email contains a link which, when clicked, takes user to a website, but in the process requests user credentials. The fraudster uses these credentials to send out harmful emails from the user's account. On mobile devices, the email sometimes appears with a coloured button saying 'Display Message'.

The fraudster then requests a bank account change from Department for Education (DfE)/ESFA (or other payment providers) often using multiple official email addresses to help create the illusion of legitimacy. Potentially, if undiscovered, a payment may be made to the fraudulent account, the account emptied and a new victim targeted.

You should:

- familiarise yourself with our guidance [on reducing any risk of financial irregularities](#), and take any necessary action to improve your counter fraud arrangements
- ensure that you have robust processes in place to protect your organisation, such as firewalls, antivirus software and strong passwords
- be alert to emails containing seemingly legitimate or secure links
- check the sender of an email is genuine before, for example, sending passwords, data or payment
- alert us at Fraud.REPORTS@education.gov.uk if you become aware of any phishing attempts

3. Information: updated high needs operational guide

We have updated the [high needs operational guide for 2019 to 2020](#) as follows:

- links to the dedicated schools grant: 2019 to 2020 and finance regulations
- 'changes to 2019 to 2020' section, to reflect the latest position on hospital education funding and post-16 changes
- 'import and export adjustment' section, this also includes advice on the process for querying data
- 'top-up funding' section to provide improved clarity on the position relating to contracting arrangements

4. Information: pupil premium allocations for 2019 to 2020

We have published [pupil premium allocations for the 2019 to 2020 financial year](#).

5. Information: universal infant free school meals (UIFSM) allocations and conditions of grant

We have published [universal infant free school meals \(UIFSM\) conditions of grant, and provisional allocations, for the 2019 to 2020 academic year](#).

We have also published [final UIFSM allocations for the 2018 to 2019 academic year](#).

6. Information: update to guidance on the teachers' pension employer contribution grant

The Department for Education (DfE) has updated the [teachers' pension employer contribution grant methodology](#), published in April this year, to provide further detail on the calculation of the grant.

We will publish the school level allocations for mainstream schools, and the local authority level allocations for high needs for the grant in October 2019. Alongside this, we will also explain how to apply for the supplementary fund.

We will make grant payments covering September 2019 through to March 2020 to local authorities at the end of October 2019, and to academies in early November 2019.

7. Information: Education and Skills grants and contracts for 2019 to 2020

In July, we will issue the new Education and Skills agreements for the 2019 to 2020 funding year. Please take the time to look at the [new framework and supporting information](#).

The agreements bring these areas together into a single document to provide a consistent framework for managing our legal relationships with providers for:

- adult education budget
- 16 to 19 education
- 16 to 18 traineeships
- apprenticeships carry-in and
- Advanced Learner Loans

8. Information: save up to 15% on your gas and electricity bill

Are you looking to renew your energy contracts in October 2019?

Our [School Switch deal](#) is already delivering average savings of 15% for schools that switched from January to May 2019.

Our simple system gives you a number of easy-to-use benefits including:

- filter and sort options based on individual school preferences
- a streamlined procurement process
- transparent and fixed pricing that can be accessed in an instant
- a fully compliant procedure
- a dedicated helpdesk to answer any questions you may have

You can read more information about the [School Switch deal](#) on GOV.UK.

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