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Correspondence

Business Update - Issue 56 (May 2020)

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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-funding-agency-business-update/business-update-issue-56-may-2020>

1. Coronavirus (COVID-19): updated guidance

Guidance, for apprentices, employers, training providers, end-point assessment organisations and external quality assurance providers during COVID-19 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-apprenticeship-programme-response/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-apprentices-employers-training-providers-end-point-assessment-organisations-and-external-quality-assurance-pro>), is available on GOV.UK.

Guidance has been updated. Updates to the guidance include:

Guidance for employers to get businesses up and running

Government has published guidance for employers (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-guidance-launched-to-help-get-brits-safely-back-to-work>) to help them get their businesses back up and running and workplaces operating safely. This new guidance covers eight workplace settings which are allowed to be open, from outdoor environments and construction sites to factories and takeaways.

FE Guidance on re-opening

As the country takes steps towards recovery, apprenticeships and skills investment will be a vital contributor to economic recovery post-pandemic. Guidance on the re-opening of FE colleges, sixth forms and secondary schools is also now available (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision/maintaining-education-and-skills-training-provision-further-education-providers>).

The priority remains the safety of all learners and staff and re-opening is based on scientific advice and we are now asking employers to work with their apprentices, learners and learning providers to help them understand plans for re-opening.

Training will be at the forefront of the country's recovery from this pandemic. It is paramount to continue to upskill our workforce and support people getting back into work. By continuing to invest in further education and apprenticeships, now and in the long term, businesses can ensure they have the skilled workforce they need post-pandemic.

Off the job training FAQ

The off the job training FAQs have been updated and can be found on the guidance and support for business page of GOV.UK (<http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses>).

SME migration onto the Apprenticeship Service

We are extending the transition period onto the apprenticeship service for SMEs. Funds available for new starts on non-levy procured contracts can now be used until 31 March 2021. All starts will be through the apprenticeship service from 1 April 2021.

Funding support for redundant apprentices

The existing funding support relating to redundancy is outlined in the below:

Apprentice is within 6 months of the final day of training

We will fund 100% of the remaining costs, of the price negotiated between the provider and the previous employer, up to the funding band maximum.

Within this 6 month period:

- if the apprentice finds a new employer where they can complete their apprenticeship, the new employer assumes outstanding liabilities and benefits from that point
- if the apprentice takes a job with an employer which is not related to their apprenticeship, we will continue to fund the remaining costs

Apprentice is between 6 months and 12 months of the final day of training

We will fund the remaining costs, of the price negotiated between the provider and the previous employer, for a maximum of 12 weeks.

Within this 12 week period:

- if the apprentice finds a new employer where they can complete their apprenticeship, the new employer assumes outstanding liabilities and benefits from that point.
- if the apprentice takes a job with an employer which is not related to their apprenticeship, we will continue to fund the remaining costs for up to 12 weeks.
- if a new employer is not found within 12 weeks, the apprentice is withdrawn from the programme but can return to the same apprenticeship at a later date, without the need to satisfy the 12 month minimum duration rule

Apprentice has more than 12 months away from the final day of training

We will fund the remaining costs of the price negotiated between the provider and the previous employer for a maximum of 12 weeks.

Within this 12 week period:

- if the apprentice finds a new employer where they can complete their apprenticeship, the new employer assumes outstanding liabilities and benefits from that point
- if the apprentice takes a job with an employer which is not related to their apprenticeship, we will continue to fund the remaining costs for up to 12 weeks
- if a new employer is not found within 12 weeks, the apprentice is withdrawn from the programme. If they return at a later date to the same apprenticeship, they would need to satisfy the 12 month minimum duration rule.

Guidance and support for businesses (<http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses>) can be found on GOV.UK.

The Business Support Helpline (<https://www.gov.uk/business-support-helpline>) number in England has changed to:

- Freephone: 0800 998 1098

The helpline provides free, impartial business support and signposting services to businesses in England – which currently includes business advice on COVID-19.

You can also find free support, advice and sources of finance through your local growth hub

(<https://lnks.gd//eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDcsInVyaSI6ImJwMjppbGljaylslmJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMDA1MTkuMjE3MTcyODEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5sZXBuZXR3b3JrLm5ldC9sb2NhbnC1ncm93dGgtaHVlLWNvbnRhY3RzLyJ9.bAJ5fOLEsQcC9dC86u0MKP1swYIPqe9cOBhH9pFrbml/br/78817340680-l>) or speak to an advisor on webchat

(https://lnks.gd//eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDgsInVyaSI6ImJwMjppbGljaylslmJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMDA1MTkuMjE3MTcyODEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3NIY3VyZS5saXZlY2hhdGluYy5jb20vbGljZW5jZS8xMDcwMTI0Mi92Mi9vcGVuX2NoYXQuY2dpP2dyb3Vwcz0wln0.nCoQKfQJHEiFa2IUnqE2oTOoRTHKWFA0jC_OVtiJ3CI/br/78817340680-l) about support for your business.

DfE coronavirus helpline:

- Telephone: 0800 046 8687