

Correspondence

ESFA Update academies: 3 March 2021

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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](#).

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

2. Action: Get Help Buying for Schools consultation

The Department for Education has launched a [public consultation](#) on a proposed new Get Help Buying for Schools service to help schools save money on their non-staff spend.

The new service will build on the achievements of the Schools Buying Hub pilots in the North West and South West. It will offer bespoke e-procurement tools, guidance, and one-to-one procurement support for complex procurements of goods and services.

We welcome the views of stakeholders across the school sector. The consultation closes on 11 March 2021.

3. Information: outcome of consultation on arrangements for exams and assessments in 2021

The Department and Ofqual recently consulted on arrangements for exams and assessments for 2021. The consultation had two pillars, one setting out proposals for GCSE, AS and A levels and one for vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) and other general qualifications.

On 25 February, the Department and Ofqual published the outcome of both consultations. You can read the analysis of consultation responses for the GCSE, AS and A levels [on GOV.UK](#). For GCSEs, AS and A levels, the Department has [published guidance](#) that explains the decisions that have been made and the actions that schools and colleges need to take.

You can read the [consultation analysis and decisions for VTQs and other general qualifications](#) on GOV.UK.

4. Information: consultation on changes to schools NFF sparsity factor in 2022 to 2023

On 2 March 2021 the Department for Education launched a [consultation](#) to seek views on how we propose to provide greater support to small, remote schools through changes to the national funding formula's (NFF) sparsity factor in 2022 to 2023.

Our proposals are to:

- begin measuring schools' sparsity distances by road journeys rather than 'as the crow flies' distances
- increase the maximum sparsity factor values across all phases, so each eligible school can attract more through the factor

This will help us to identify remote schools more accurately and fairly, leading to a greater number of schools becoming eligible for sparsity funding. This will also result in an increase in the amount distributed through the sparsity factor, to better support small schools in rural areas without which pupils may face unreasonably long travel distances to get to school.

We welcome your views on these proposals; please respond [online](#) wherever possible. If, for exceptional reasons, you are unable to use the online system, the consultation document outlines alternative ways to respond.

The consultation closes on 9 April 2021.

5. Information: how education settings can take part in the Protect Duty consultation

On 26 February, the government [launched a consultation on a 'Protect Duty'](#), which seeks to improve security and organisational preparedness at a wide range of publicly accessible locations, including education settings. The consultation will run until 2 July 2021.

The consultation will seek views on:

- who would a Duty apply to?
- what would a proposed Duty require stakeholders to do?
- how should compliance work?
- how would Government support those affected by a Duty?

It's important to get a wide range of views from across the education sector to inform the development of the Duty, anyone who is linked to education or has an interest in education can [take part in the consultation](#).

6. Information: Early Careers Framework (ECF) reforms

From this September, statutory induction for new teachers will change as part of the Early Career Framework (ECF) reforms. Through these reforms, all early career teachers in England undergoing statutory induction will be entitled to 2 years of high-quality professional development support and training.

On 1 March the Department for Education announced that Ambition Institute, Best Practice Network, Capita with lead academic partner the University of Birmingham, Education Development Trust, Teach First and UCL Institute of Education have been selected to deliver funded training programmes based on the ECF as part of national roll-out.

Schools can choose to sign up to one of these provider-led programmes, utilise DfE accredited materials to deliver a programme of training and support, or design their own induction programme based on the ECF.

All state funded schools offering statutory induction will receive additional funding to deliver the ECF reforms.

For more information on the ECF reforms, visit [GOV.UK](#).

If you would like to receive direct updates from the department on the ECF reforms, please fill in [this form](#).

7. Information: monitoring post-16 funding

We have analysed R06 ILR data and refreshed the [post-16 monitoring reports dashboard](#). A number of providers have accessed the dashboard regularly and corrected data since its release last year; please continue to review reports as part of your monthly business activity. A new [video guide](#) will be published demonstrating how to export data from the dashboard. We will publish further videos in the future based on common feedback and queries.

We have identified that some providers are re-using learner reference numbers from previous years: this field is used for calculations and reporting, and must not be re-used for a different learner. We will contact providers through territorial leads to ensure data is corrected.

We will reduce the amount of correspondence we send you. If we identify errors, we will only send one generic letter instead of multiple letters. We will not contact you immediately if we see that you are correcting errors between months. We will request evidence to support some reports and inform policy development through [ESFA Information Exchange](#). Please ensure that you have an account with access to the document exchange area.

8. Information: ESFA communities – online discussion forum

[Get help with Education and Skills Funding Agency services](#) is a help centre hosted by the ESFA. We already use it to share knowledge articles and have now added an online discussion forum, ESFA Communities, for you to talk to each other. It is a peer-to-peersupport model that already works very well for further education providers.

To post on the forum or subscribe for alerts, users will need to register on this new service. Registrations will be approved by ESFA moderators to make sure that those using the forum are from schools, academies, or local authorities.

If you have any issues or want to know more about the service, please contact customer.experience@education.gov.uk.

9. Information: Managing the School Estate Summit, 24 March 2021

The [Managing the School Estate Summit](#), is taking place online on 24 March 2021.

The interactive event will allow discussion around how we build, manage, and maintain the school estate, with focus on the importance of strategic estate management and making the most of your resources.

The event is aimed at anyone involved in school estate management, from those who are new to the role to those who wish to extend and build their expertise. Places are free of charge to attend for those directly employed by a school or public sector body.

For more information, please visit the [event website](#) and [book your place](#).

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