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Education & Skills Funding Agency

Correspondence

ESFA Update further education: 26 June 2019

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Contents

1. Action: subcontractor declaration for adult delivery, including apprenticeships and traineeships
2. Information: further education phishing alert
3. Information: 2018 to 2019 year-end forecast funding claim, indicative reconciliation statement
4. Information: Education and Skills grants and contracts
5. Information: in-year qualification achievement rates for 2018 to 2019
6. Information: developing a new transparency table for apprenticeship standards qualification achievement rates (QARs)
7. Information: updated high needs operational guide
8. Information: change in payment dates from August 2019

1. Action: subcontractor declaration for adult delivery, including apprenticeships and traineeships

Organisations delivering ESFA funded adult programmes, including all apprenticeships and traineeships, must declare their subcontracting arrangements by Friday 12 July 2019.

This is the first collection for levy and non-levy funded apprenticeship delivery for the year from April 2019 to March 2020 and the second collection for all other adult delivery for the year from August 2018 to July 2019.

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 contact SDE.servicedesk@education.gov.uk.

2. Information: further education 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:

- 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: 2018 to 2019 year-end forecast funding claim, indicative reconciliation statement

Following the 2018 to 2019 year-end forecast funding claims process (relevant to the funding streams below) your indicative year-end reconciliation statements will soon be available via the Manage your education and skills funding (MYESF)

service:

- grant funded Adult Education Budget (AEB)
- learner Support for Procured AEB
- Advanced Learning Loans Bursary

These statements are provisional following the R10 data return. The final reconciliation statements will be published on MYESF in November 2019, following the final funding claim process in October.

Where appropriate, we will record any AEB funded queries in the provisional reconciliation statements published in July. This is so you are aware of the potential impact before year-end reconciliation statements. We will recover any over claim after the final R14 ILR return for 2018 to 2019.

If you have any queries please contact the Service Desk or your Territorial team.

4. Information: Education and Skills grants and contracts

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

5. Information: in-year qualification achievement rates for 2018 to 2019

We will release the R10 in-year qualification achievement rates (QARs) data for 2018 to 2019 tomorrow, Thursday 27th June 2019, on both the Hub and dashboard through the View Your Education Data portal. The in-year QAR guidance and QAR webpage provide details about this data release and accessing the dashboard.

You should review your in-year QAR data to check that your data is accurate. We have supplied some more information about the common data issues and funding monitoring reports that can help you review your data. We urge you to review your data now as we cannot correct your data after the final R14 submission.

To access the data, please ensure you have the correct IDAMS user access. Please see the IDAMS user guides for creating access or checking your user permissions.

If you have any questions, please contact the service desk.

6. Information: developing a new transparency table for apprenticeship standards qualification achievement rates (QARs)

During the transition period to apprenticeship standards, where new relationships between training providers and end point assessment organisations are being built and consolidated, we recognise that some apprentices are unable to complete their apprenticeship standard at the time it was initially recorded on the ILR.

Where apprentices are planned to complete between May and July 2019, and will not be able to complete until after July 2019, this will impact on provider Qualification achievement rates (QARs).

To account for these delays, we will publish a new transparency table in March 2020. This builds upon the apprenticeship standards explanatory paper we published alongside the official National Achievement Rate tables (NARTs) last year, giving the sector more information about standards as the programme develops.

The official QAR will be published through the National Achievement Rate tables in March 2020, and the new table will be published alongside NARTs transparency tables at the same time.

We will provide more information about this new table in due course, however it will contain as a minimum:

- the key figures from the QAR calculations (the volumes of leavers, achievers and the QAR)
- the apprentices who were excluded from this year's QAR because of delays, meaning that they did not achieve or withdraw by their planned end date
- a subset of the apprentices above who subsequently achieved between August to October 2019

- a new unofficial QAR that includes the late achievements above

We are developing how we use this data, and will provide more information in due course, covering:

- working with Ofsted to ensure that they understand what we have done and why, so that they use the data appropriately in their inspection planning and judgements.
- recognising this data in our approach to applying minimum standards
- reviewing what we provide in Find Apprenticeship Training

7. 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

8. Information: change in payment dates from August 2019

We are changing the date on which we make payments from August 2019.

We are combining the adult payment dates into one and will pay the following funding streams on the 14th working day of the month:

- adult education budget (AEB)
- apprenticeships
- Advanced Learner Loans Bursary
- European Social Fund (ESF)
- National Careers Service
- 16 to 18 traineeships
- career learning pilots

Any payments relating to these funding streams will reach bank accounts on 20

August 2019, and then on the 14th working day thereafter.

If you have any questions, please contact us via email at payment.queries@education.gov.uk.

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