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### Correspondence

# ESFA Update academies: 4 March 2020

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#### Contents

1. [Information: helpline launched to answer questions about COVID-19 related to education](#)
2. [Information: teachers' pay grant and teachers' pension employer contribution grant updates](#)
3. [Information: themes arising from ESFA's assurance work](#)
4. [Information: national non-domestic rates \(NDR\) claims online form](#)
5. [Your feedback: would you like to take part in](#)

## 1. Information: helpline launched to answer questions about COVID-19 related to education

The Department for Education has launched a new helpline to answer questions about COVID-19 related to education. Staff, parents and young people can contact the helpline as follows:

- phone: 0800 046 8687
- email: [DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk](mailto:DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk)

The opening hours are 8am to 6pm (Monday to Friday).

The [latest guidance for education settings](#) is available on GOV.UK.

research around education funding transparency?

6. Information: registration for the WorldSkills UK skills competitions
7. Information: The Trust Network's national school estates conference
8. Information: new analysis suggests potential interventions to improve educational attainment of children and young people who have had a social worker
9. Information: support for your advanced mathematics provision
10. Your feedback: we would welcome your feedback on a new online form to report extremism concerns

## 2. Information: teachers' pay grant and teachers' pension employer contribution grant updates

The Department for Education (DfE) has updated the [teachers' pay grant](#) and [teachers' pension employer contribution grant](#) methodology pages to confirm the rates that will be used to calculate school and local authority allocations for the 5 month period from April 2020 to August 2020. These rates have been calculated as five sevenths of the 7 month rates for September 2019 to March 2020.

In March we will publish school and local authority-level grant allocations for this period, ahead of payments in April for local authority maintained schools and May for academies.

## 3. Information: themes arising from ESFA's assurance work

We've published [themes arising from ESFA's assurance work](#) outlining the outcomes of the programme of our assurance work relating to the financial oversight and management of the academies sector in 2018 to 2019.

Highlighting common themes in our work aims to enable the sector to improve the quality of its financial governance. The briefing is for academy trust accounting officers, finance staff and trustees. Auditors of academy trust accounts may also find it helpful.

## 4. Information: national non-domestic rates (NNDR) claims online form

The [online form](#) for [national non-domestic rates \(NNDR\) claims](#) will be closed between 5pm on Friday 13 March and Wednesday 1 April 2020.

We are completing a system upgrade which will make the process easier and reduce the lead-in time for payments.

## 5. Your feedback: would you like to take part in research around education

# funding transparency?

The Manage your education and skills funding service (MyESF) team are looking to speak to individuals at academies, multi-academy trusts and single academy trusts that work with the general annual grant (GAG) allocation statement.

This piece of research will be looking at the clarity of the GAG statement and its supporting guidance for users. The results will feed into the design of digital allocation statements. Participation is welcomed from new and experienced users.

What this would involve:

- we will invite you to an online remote meeting with a researcher.
- a conversation about your experience and current behaviour reading the GAG
- participation in two exercises to explore comprehension and guidance needs

The session will last approximately 60 minutes and will give you the opportunity to provide feedback to government service designers.

Sessions will run from Tuesday 10 March 2020 to Friday 13 March 2020.

To take part, please complete [our survey](#), and our researcher will be in touch to agree a meeting time.

## 6. Information: registration for the WorldSkills UK skills competitions

Registration for WorldSkills UK (WSUK) skills competitions opened on Monday and is open until Thursday 2 April 2020. The UK-wide skills competitions attract approximately 3,500 students and apprentices, all competing in any of the 70 available skills, and those that excel may go on to form Team UK to represent their country at the 'Skills Olympics' in Lyon in 2023.

Beyond the significant development of competitors, there are also associated benefits for providers. Registering for and taking part in WSUK skills competitions is free and, the [apprenticeship levy](#) can be used to support apprentices taking part.

Entering students for competitions can also demonstrate compliance to common Ofsted inspection standards, by using competition activity to deliver high quality training and assessments and demonstrating excellence in behaviours and attitudes.

If you would like to know more you can watch this short film, visit the skills section of the [WSUK website](#), or [email us](#).

## 7. Information: The Trust Network's national school estates conference

On 11 March 2020 The Trust Network are holding their fourth national school estates conference: 'Guidance into Practice' in Corby. [The full agenda](#) is now available on The Trust Network's website.

There are some places left, so if you would be interested in attending this event please contact:

- email: [catejohnstone@thetrustnetwork.org.uk](mailto:catejohnstone@thetrustnetwork.org.uk)
- telephone: 0121 262 4725

## 8. Information: new analysis suggests potential interventions to improve educational attainment of children and young people who have had a social worker

What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC) and the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) have released the findings from a large scale re-analysis of the EEF's database of randomised controlled trials (RCTs) looking at effects on children and young people who have had a social worker.

This new research identifies ten projects that show 'Signs of Potential' - interventions that appear to have larger positive impacts for children and young people who have had a social worker than for their peers.

The Department for Education's Children in Need review (June 2019) found that children and young people who have been in contact with social care services have poorer educational outcomes than their peers at every stage. Last year, the [final publication](#) of the review identified a gap in the evidence of what works in supporting children who have needed a social worker and committed to continue to build this evidence.

You can read the [summary of findings](#) and visit [What Works for Children's Social Care](#) for further resources.

## 9. Information: support for your advanced mathematics provision

Is your school engaging with the Advanced Mathematics Support Programme (AMSP)?

The [AMSP](#) is funded by the Department for Education (DfE) to help schools and colleges increase participation in core maths and AS/A level mathematics and further mathematics. The programme provides local support with planning your provision of these qualifications, together with free resources and an extensive range of professional development. If you are unable to offer AS/A level further mathematics, the AMSP can arrange tuition. Additional support is available in areas of low social mobility.

A key focus of the programme is to raise awareness and uptake of [core maths](#), a level 3 qualification designed for students who have achieved a grade 4 or above in GCSE mathematics but do not wish to study AS/A level mathematics.

The AMSP also provides professional development for teachers of GCSE mathematics, and enrichment activities to inspire students to choose to study mathematics beyond GCSE.

You can [subscribe to receive updates from the AMSP](#).

## 10. Your feedback: we would welcome your feedback on a new online form to report extremism concerns

As part of our work to help the education sector raise any matters or concerns that arise on extremism, we would like to speak to the sector to receive their feedback on a new online form.

DfE offer a service for anyone to report a concern relating to extremism within an educational environment using email or phone. We are currently working on an online form as an additional anonymous method to use the service. To ensure that the form is intuitive and easy to use, we're looking for some volunteers to help us with our research. The research session will consist of you going through a test version of the form.

If you wish to take part in the research, where we will spend 30 to 45 minutes speaking to you on a 1 to 1 basis, either remotely using Skype or during a site visit, please email [DataScience.USERRESEARCH@education.gov.uk](mailto:DataScience.USERRESEARCH@education.gov.uk) by Friday 6 March 2020.

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