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Part of
Education and childcare during coronavirus

Department
for Education

Guidance

Guidance for further education and skills providers

Updated 15 July 2020

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Main changes to previous guidance

The changes include:

- additional wording to clarify that we would not normally expect adults to be included in the cohort returning to on-site delivery from 15 June, subject to the flexibilities listed in the changes to delivery section
- additional wording to clarify that providers can offer all learners under 19 years old a face-to-face meeting before the end of term, where it would be beneficial
- small additions to the wording of mental health and wellbeing section
- an additional line on the date traineeship flexibilities run from
- a new section on supported internships
- amended lines on awarding of vocational qualifications
- 3 additional case studies in the toolkit for engaging vulnerable young people
- a disclaimer following the Increasing attendance in FE colleges and other providers checklist

Introduction

On 24 May the Prime Minister announced that secondary schools could provide some face-to-face contact for year 10 and year 12 students to help them prepare for exams next year, with a quarter of these students in at any one point.

For further education (FE) settings (including general further education colleges, sixth form colleges, and other providers) the equivalent approach applies and FE settings should plan on the basis that from the week commencing 15 June, they can broaden the number of 16 to 19 learners (equivalent to year 10/year 12 in schools and sixth forms) attending on-site delivery.

Remote education should remain the predominant mode of learning during this time. To help reduce the coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission risk, the number of learners attending at any one time will be limited to a quarter of those on the first year of a 2 year 16 to 19 study programme.

This means that from the week commencing 15 June:

- all FE settings including FE colleges, sixth form colleges, independent training providers (ITPs) and local authority providers should continue to prioritise on-site provision for vulnerable learners (including those at high risk of becoming NEET - not in education, employment or training) and the children of critical workers - young people who have been attending special post-16 institutions should continue to do so
- for 16 to 19 learners who are in the first year of a 16 to 19 study programme, FE settings can offer some face-to-face contact to support remote learning
- all learners under 19 years old can be offered a face-to-face meeting before the end of the summer term, where it would be beneficial

Further information on what this means in practice is in the changes to delivery section.

The guidance on how to phase the return of learners in further education is underpinned by our latest understanding of coronavirus (COVID-19) (the new COVID-19 disease which was first diagnosed in China). To limit the risk of increasing the rate of transmission, scientific evidence indicates that we need to take a phased approach that limits both the number of children and young people in attendance and how much they mix with other learners and staff. This is set out in detail in our guidance on protective measures for education settings.

We want to get all further education learners back into education settings as soon as the scientific evidence allows because it is the best place for them to learn, and because we know how important it is for their mental wellbeing to have social interactions with their peers and teachers.

Guidance on actions for education and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June 2020 was published by the department on 11 May.

Guidance for apprentices, employers, training providers and assessment organisations relating to the apprenticeships programme in response to the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) is available.

Further information on the financial support that is available for different types of education, early years and children's social care providers in England is available in Coronavirus (COVID-19): financial support for education, early years and children's social care. This includes information on access to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) for furloughed workers and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA's) response to the Cabinet Office's Procurement Policy Note 02/20.

For colleges in significant financial difficulties, the existing support arrangements remain in place including short term solvency support through emergency funding.

We are immensely grateful to providers for the vital role they are playing in supporting the national response to coronavirus (COVID-19). We recognise the significant efforts the vast majority of FE providers have taken to shift to delivering remote teaching and education, and know that many have stayed open to support vulnerable learners and dependants of critical workers.

Changes to delivery

From the week commencing 15 June, FE providers should offer some face to face contact for 16 to 19 learners on the first year of a study programme, as part of a combined approach in which remote education remains the predominant form of education. This is subject to a limit of a quarter of these learners being on-site at any one time.

This will primarily impact schools and colleges, but will also include a small number of local authority providers, special post-16 institutions and independent training providers.

Our overriding principle is that the focus should be 16 to 19 year olds on the first year of a 2 year programme and that total numbers attending at any one time should not exceed a quarter of this group, allowing for learners in this group already in attendance. This is in addition to vulnerable young people and children of critical workers outside of this cohort who might already be in full-time attendance. We would not normally expect adults to be included in the cohort returning to on-site delivery, subject to the flexibilities below. The following points set out areas where there will need to be flexibility, but they are subject to that overall limit:

- although the main face-to-face contact is for 16 to 19 learners, there may be some courses that include learners within a class that are over 19 - if these learners attend on-site delivery, the maximum number of 16 to 19 year olds attending on-site at any one time must be reduced to ensure the setting remains within the overall limit
- some 16 to 19 learners will have been due to finish this academic year, but have not been able to because their assessments have been deferred (typically where they involve a license to practice), these learners can be included in on-site delivery – again they are included within the limit, and numbers of first year students must be reduced to ensure the overall number is not exceeded
- 16 to 19 year old apprentices are on a study programme, and we expect them to be treated consistently for their off-site training with other learners (16 to 19 year olds on the first year of an apprenticeship are included in the number eligible, and any who attend a setting are included in the maximum number attending at any one time)
- some learners may be on extended programmes, for example, because they are studying part-time, alongside caring responsibilities or had to retake exams or part of their programme - if they are part way through a study programme, and have key exams and assessments next year, they can be included, provided the total number of students attending at any one time at the setting does not exceed the number described above as a proportion of first year learners

Colleges and other FE settings are already welcoming increased numbers of 16 to 19 learners in the first year of a 2 year programme back on-site from 15 June. We know that FE settings are keen to invite other learners under the age of 19 in for a face-to-face meeting before the end of term, where it would be beneficial. As long as this happens in line with wider protective measures guidance, and guidance on the numbers of students permitted on-site at any one time, we would encourage this where possible. This time can be used to check-in on students, and ensure they are supported before a return from September or moving into employment or the next stage of education or training.

On-site provision should continue to be offered to vulnerable young people and the children of critical workers in accordance with the published definitions, and this should have priority over other learning. Vulnerable learners and the dependants of critical workers in the first year of a 16 to 19 study programme who attend on-site delivery must be included when ensuring that no more than a quarter of learners in that cohort are on-site at one time. Vulnerable learners and the dependants of critical workers from other cohorts (for example those in the second year of a study programme, or older learners with an Education Health Care (EHC) plan), are the only group that is in addition to the limit meaning that if, for example, older vulnerable learners attend, it is not necessary to reduce the number of first year 16 to 19 learners attending to compensate.

Special post-16 institutions will work towards a phased return of as many young people as can be safely catered for in their setting. This should be done without specific regard to year groups (unless that is appropriate for the individual young person) or proportions of learners.

In order to determine what level of attendance is appropriate, colleges and other providers should conduct risk assessments in order to understand:

- the number of learners and staff likely to attend
- whether they can be safely accommodated in accordance with the guidance to implement protective measures
- the availability of teaching and non-teaching staff and required ratios, including contingency plans should members of the workforce be shielding or self-isolating
- support services required to increase the number of individuals on-site (for example, catering) and how they can be provided
- what measures, in addition to those that have already been undertaken during the current level of provision, will need to be in place to accommodate additional numbers (including additional cleaning required of spaces and equipment following use)

We are asking settings to implement a range of protective measures including increased cleaning, reducing 'pinch points' (such as at the start and end of day), and utilising outdoor space. Any additional costs arising from wider opening, such as personal protective equipment (PPE) will be funded from existing college budgets. Staff and learners, alongside everyone in the wider population, are eligible for testing if they become ill with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, as will members of their households. A negative test will enable learners and staff to get back to their education. A positive test will ensure rapid action to protect their classmates and staff in their setting.

Those who are clinically vulnerable, clinically extremely vulnerable, or are living with someone who is, should follow our protective measures guidance.

In line with implementing protective measures and reducing contacts, colleges and other providers should limit the attendance of learners in the setting at any one time and keep learners in small and consistent groups. In particular, mixing between different groups of learners should be kept to a minimum. Providers should aim to practise social distancing in line with the measures the government is asking everyone to adopt in public and in workplaces, including keeping learners 2 metres apart from each other where possible.

Colleges and other providers should consider how learners travel to and from education settings, and learners should be encouraged walk, cycle or drive where possible. In preparing for an increase in the number of learners from the week commencing 15 June, colleges and other providers should consider:

- how many learners in the eligible cohorts will be travelling at the same time
- how those learners are likely to travel
- the likelihood of learners mixing with each other and coming into contact with other people on the journey to and from education settings

Providers should ensure the use that public transport to travel to and from education settings should only be used when no other option is available, and where it is totally necessary, this should not be during peak times. Providers should introduce staggered start and end times as appropriate to achieve this. The Department for Transport has produced guidance for passengers who need to travel during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Our guidance on implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings contains detailed advice for settings on:

- environmental cleaning
- ensuring supplies of cleaning and handwashing products
- testing and tracing
- PPE
- what settings should do in response to a case of coronavirus (COVID-19) being confirmed

We recognise that for some programmes, remote education will be working effectively with a high degree of learner engagement (while some families may, for example, include family members who are shielding and therefore learners are not able to physically attend). Colleges and other providers will have flexibility to decide the appropriate mix of online and face to face content for each programme, within the constraint of limiting those on-site at any one time, reflecting what will maximise learner engagement as well as supporting more vulnerable learners, and enabling the provider as a whole to minimise transmission risk.

For 16 to 19 learners eligible to return, in balancing on-site and online delivery, colleges may consider the following issues, within the constraint on overall numbers:

- types of study where providers have found it more challenging to engage learners in their online offer
- learners that require on-site provision in order to undertake technical instruction which requires the use of equipment
- the impact on the risk of transmission (for example it may be easier to undertake instruction in outside settings or larger spaces) - some types of vocational instruction may be more challenging where they by their nature involve personal contact
- where remote education is working well with high engagement, colleges may wish to maintain a larger element of online delivery
- it may be advantageous to offer all learners some face to face contact, even if to varying degrees

We are consulting with sector representatives in order to develop and promote best practice models of how inviting additional learners in the eligible cohorts back into education settings could operate.

Dependants of critical workers

Parents whose work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) response include those who work in health and social care, in the education and children sector (including further education) and in other key sectors outlined in the list of critical workers who can access schools or educational settings.

We recommend you ask for simple evidence that the parent in question is a critical worker, such as their work ID badge or pay slip. It would be overly burdensome on key sectors at this critical time to ask employers to write a letter on behalf of their employees.

Information on vulnerable young people

Vulnerable children and young people for the purposes of continued educational provision during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak are those across all year groups who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child and are up to age 19
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan up to age 25 and it is determined, following risk assessment, that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the educational environment
- have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by educational providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), are up to age 19 and who are therefore in need of continued education provision - this might include children on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services, adopted children, children and young people at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training'), those living in temporary accommodation, those who are young carers and others at the provider and local authority's discretion

More information, including the expectations around attendance and encouraging attendance for different groups of vulnerable young people, can be found in supporting vulnerable children and young people during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The government has set out guidance on staying alert and safe (social distancing) to help educational settings support safe provision for everyone who attends.

Many colleges and other providers have already taken steps to support vulnerable young people, and the children of critical workers who cannot be supported elsewhere, and we are grateful to providers for the vital role they are playing in supporting the national response to coronavirus (COVID-19).

Specifically, we are asking that colleges and other providers continue to provide a safe space and encourage attendance. Being in an educational setting can be an important lifeline for many vulnerable young people, particularly where their needs cannot be met safely at home or where they may be at risk of harm.

There is a continuing expectation now and throughout the period from the week commencing 15 June, that vulnerable young people – regardless of year group – will attend educational provision, where it is safe and appropriate for them do so.

From the week commencing 15 June, young people in returning year groups – including vulnerable young people - are strongly encouraged to attend their educational setting where possible, unless they are ill, or guidance says they should not attend.

Providers are expected to follow the process set out on encouraging, enabling and monitoring attendance and following up on non-attendance, see supporting vulnerable children and young people during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

We appreciate that decisions on attendance will likely be based on finely balanced discussions between the education provider, the parent/carer and others, including social workers, local authorities and other relevant professionals where applicable. The decision might be taken that the learner should attend the educational setting on a full-time or part-time basis, depending on the needs of the individual. We also appreciate that circumstances do change and therefore attendance decisions should be kept under review. For young people with an education, health and care (EHC) plan, colleges and other providers should ensure that existing risk assessments are up to date.

Where vulnerable young people are already attending educational settings, they should continue to do so. Where young people are currently not attending but attendance is appropriate, we expect providers and local authorities to consider how to encourage their attendance.

If it is not possible for a vulnerable young person to attend a provider due to public transport routes being closed, then providers should speak to the local authority to consider what alternative transport arrangements could be put in place.

Make alternative arrangements

We are asking colleges and other providers that have been closed to work towards wider opening from the week commencing 15 June, so we expect the number of colleges and other providers that are closed to decline. However, in the meantime, if a college or another provider is closed, the provider should notify the local authority/social worker. Providers should work with the local authority to ensure that the vulnerable young people who normally attend can be found a place in another educational setting. Providers can also contact their local ESFA team to discuss wider opening and which other local providers it may be possible for them to work with.

Keep in contact with all vulnerable learners

As per the existing guidance on vulnerable children and young people, all vulnerable young people continue to be expected and encouraged to attend educational provision where it is appropriate for them to do so. Colleges and other providers which are currently closed to all learners are being asked to work towards wider opening from the week commencing 15 June.

However, where it is not safe for vulnerable learners to attend, or vulnerable learners cannot be persuaded to attend education settings, colleges and other providers should maintain regular communication with social workers, vulnerable leaners and their families to ensure they know where their vulnerable learners are and that they are safe. Colleges and other providers should continue to encourage attendance where appropriate. The frequency of contact required will depend on the individual's circumstances and needs and will be based on the assessment of risk. Social workers will remain in contact with vulnerable learners and their families, including remotely if needed.

See the toolkit for engaging vulnerable young people for a collection of examples from providers who are successfully engaging vulnerable young people. It is intended to provide an opportunity for colleges and other providers to learn from each other's emerging practice and develop their approach to engaging vulnerable learners in education.

Colleges and other providers should continue to comply with the keeping children safe in education statutory guidance. There is further information on safeguarding in coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers.

Specific advice for learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Supporting young people in general FE colleges

Young people up to the age of 25 with EHC plans in colleges and other providers should, like their peers, go back to college and other providers if they are in the eligible cohorts, and where medical advice suggests they are not clinically extremely vulnerable to coronavirus (COVID-19).

For all young people with EHC plans, we would encourage colleges, other providers and local authorities to assure themselves that risk assessments remain current (see supporting children and young people with SEND as schools and colleges prepare for wider opening guidance). Colleges and other providers should encourage any learner with an EHC plan to return to education settings if the provider judges that this would be beneficial.

We encourage colleges and other providers to pay particular attention to learners with EHC plans who are about to make a transition to another setting or to adult life, including those starting or finishing a supported internship. These learners may need some form of face to face transition, even if they are not attending their usual place of education.

We recognise that as some young people with SEND, whether they have an EHC plan or not, will need careful preparation for their return (for example, social stories to help with the transition, or routes around the college marked in Braille or with other meaningful symbols to maintain social distancing). The increase in attendance for those with EHC plans in eligible cohorts may be gradual and take place over a period of time if necessary to do so to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

Young people in special post-16 institutions

Special post-16 institutions will work towards a phased return of as many young people as can be safely catered for in their setting. This should be done without specific regard to year groups of proportions of learners.

EHC plans – temporary legislative changes

Coronavirus (COVID-19) may make it more difficult for a local authority or health commissioning body to secure or arrange all the elements of the specified special educational and health provision in an EHC plan as required by section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Due to the unprecedented circumstances presented by coronavirus (COVID-19), the section 42 duty has been temporarily modified, so that local authorities and health commissioning bodies can discharge this duty by using their 'reasonable endeavours'. We have published detailed guidance on these temporary legislative changes.

The duty on education settings – including colleges and other providers – to co-operate with the local authority in the performance of its SEND duties remains in place. Close working and communication between all parties is a central element in ensuring that young people do receive appropriate provision.

Working together to safeguard young people

Colleges, other providers, social workers, local authorities and other professionals will want to work together to ensure adequate and appropriate arrangements are in place to keep in touch with vulnerable young people (whether they are attending provision, or not attending for an agreed or non-agreed reason).

Local authorities have the key day-to-day responsibility for the delivery of children and young people's social care. Social workers and Virtual School Heads (VSH) will continue to work with vulnerable young people in this difficult period.

Where vulnerable young people with a social worker do not take up their place in educational settings or discontinue attendance, the provider should notify their social worker.

If there are challenges contacting and engaging looked after children, providers should discuss concerns with their local virtual school heads (VSH) in the first instance.

Colleges and other providers are encouraged to share their lists of vulnerable young people who should be attending provision with their local authority.

It is particularly important for college and provider staff to work with and support children's social workers and the local authority VSH for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Colleges and other providers should continue to have regard to statutory safeguarding guidance on inter-agency working, set out in working together to safeguard children. Providers should also refer to keeping children safe in education and coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers.

Mental health and wellbeing

Many learners and staff members will be feeling uncertain and anxious and it is vital that they can still access the mental health and wellbeing support they need. Providers will need to consider their learners' and staff members' mental health and wellbeing and identify those who may need additional support.

All NHS mental health trusts are setting up 24/7 helplines and seeking to use digital and virtual channels to continue delivering support during the pandemic.

Social connections, alongside exercise, sleep, a healthy diet and routine, are important protective factors for mental health and wellbeing. Resources to promote and support mental wellbeing are included in the list of online resources we have published to help children and young people to learn at home.

Public Health England have also published more extensive guidance on supporting children and young people's mental health and guidance for the public on mental health and wellbeing. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is providing £5m of additional funding for mental health charities (to support adults and young people).

Digital support includes:

- an educational resource for adults about children and young people's mental health, which is relevant for teachers, other professionals working with children, volunteers, parents and carers
- the Every Mind Matters platform from Public Health England has specific advice for adults and young people on maintaining good mental wellbeing during the outbreak
- the Association of Colleges has produced a coronavirus (COVID-19) resource hub which includes advice for students and staff

Mental health is also covered in the interim safeguarding guidance, and the principles in keeping children safe in education continue to apply. Below are some suggestions as to how providers have supported their learners with their mental health and wellbeing:

- making effective use of remote one-to-one counselling
- encouraging young people to identify their own self-care strategies during this uncertain time, online resources can help with this - some providers are running live mindfulness classes to improve learner wellbeing.
- completing welfare checks at the start of each session to ensure that all learners are engaged and supported
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) lessons have been delivered remotely and focused on topics relevant to learners being at home, including mental health awareness, healthy living and online safety
- there are many studies which have shown that doing physical activity can improve mental health Sport England has enlisted 450 School Games Organisers to help deliver a programme of free daily digital content to help keep young people active

Residential providers

We are expecting residential further education providers to keep their residential provision open where necessary, and decisions will have to happen on a case by case basis. It is especially important that residential providers remain open to those who have particular needs that cannot be accommodated safely at home, and those who do not have suitable alternative accommodation.

In collaboration with Public Health England and Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), we have produced guidance on isolation for residential educational settings, including further education providers with residential accommodation and residential special colleges. This contains advice on how to manage self-isolation in such settings in the event of a confirmed or possible case.

Funding

We recognise that the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak carries financial implications for many providers, and we are working to make changes where we can. We set out below the flexibilities we are introducing to support grant funded providers to continue to deliver learning.

To help manage the financial implications, we can confirm that the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) will continue to pay grant funded providers their scheduled monthly profiled payments for the remainder of the 2019 to 2020 funding year.

ESFA allocations for 2020 to 2021 have been confirmed, and payments will be made in line with the national profile which will be confirmed in the relevant 2020 to 2021 funding rules.

16 to 19 funding arrangements (grant-funded providers)

As we will use data from the 2019 to 2020 academic year to calculate 16 to 19 allocations for 2021 to 2022, the ESFA may need to apply a different approach to a number of elements within 16 to 19 funding. Where appropriate we will, therefore, use alternative data sources to calculate allocations for 2021 to 2022 to ensure as far as possible that there is not a disproportionate impact on funding.

The retention factor

If learners are unable to complete their study programme as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19) and are recorded as withdrawn in end-year data this could impact on the retention factor used to calculate 16 to 19 allocations for 2021 to 2022. We will, therefore, review the data we use to calculate this as the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) becomes clearer.

In year recruitment of learners

We currently use the profile of recruitment throughout the year to determine the lagged student numbers used in 16 to 19 allocations. For providers who recruit learners later in the year rather than purely at the beginning of the academic year, and whose enrolment of new learners in the summer term will have ceased, we will determine a way to ensure this does not have an unfairly detrimental impact on future allocations. For example, we could still apply the current approach of identifying what proportion of student numbers were recruited after we take the initial data return in the autumn but use full year data from 2018 to 2019.

Student prior attainment in English and/or maths GCSEs

Three elements within the 16 to 19 funding formula use students' prior attainment in English and/or maths, namely:

- the condition of funding
- disadvantage funding - block 2
- level 3 programme maths and English payment

We anticipate that these will continue to be calculated as now following the alternative plans that have now been published to award grades to students in the absence of GCSE exams this summer, and so providers will still be allocated additional funding for young people with low prior attainment in GCSE English or maths. As further details are published for how the replacement for exams will work, we will consider these elements in more detail.

Funding to prepare for and deliver T levels

Allocations have been made to providers who will be delivering the first wave of T levels in 2020 to 2021 based on planned T level student numbers. We have already published the approach for applying a tolerance where enrolment of T level students is below the planned number.

Due to the lagged student number approach, where the level of T level students recruited means the tolerance would be implemented, only the numbers above the tolerance would be converted to a full-time band 5 student. Read more about the tolerance and [how T levels will be funded in 2020 to 2021](#).

We will monitor the suitability of this approach over the coming months as we get nearer to the introduction of T levels.

Industry Placement Capacity and Delivery Fund (CDF) 2019 to 2020

The unprecedented impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) has meant that it is currently extremely difficult for providers to continue to organise and deliver industry placements through the Capacity and Delivery Fund (CDF).

Given these exceptional and unprecedented circumstances, providers will not be penalised for missing specific CDF industry placement targets this academic year. Funding will not be clawed back if providers can demonstrate how the funding has and will continue to support your work on industry placement delivery. We want to make sure that providers are able to maximise the activity that they are able to carry out during this period to continue to support the delivery of placements, and to prepare to deliver placements in 2020 to 2021. Activities we would expect to continue to go ahead:

- continuing to build relationships with employers and developing engagement strategies for different industries
- preparing students for placements (such as through virtual training for work programmes)
- ensuring alignment between curriculum planning and industry placement provision
- developing matching processes for when students can go on placements again

We will ask for evidence of this through the usual autumn CDF monitoring process in order to minimise reporting burdens, and we will still look to claw back funding under the usual arrangements should providers fail to demonstrate they have continued to support the delivery of industry placements. Providers must avoid the risk of double funding. We will seek to claw back funding should providers furlough staff involved in these activities.

Free meals in further education

We expect further education institutions to continue to support students who are eligible for, and usually receive free meals in further education, or are newly eligible, whether they are continuing to attend the provider or are studying remotely due to coronavirus (COVID-19) related issues. Read further guidance on [free meals in further education funded institutions for 2019 to 2020](#).

High needs funding for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Colleges and other providers will continue to receive from the ESFA allocations of high needs place funding (at £6,000 per place per annum) for the remainder of the academic year 2019 to 2020.

Local authorities will also continue to receive their high needs funding for the financial year beginning April 2020 and should continue to pay high needs top-up funding to colleges, special post-16 institutions and other providers at the rates they have determined. This will ensure that the institution's employment and payment of staff supporting students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can continue. If placements for the summer term, and top-up funding, were anticipated but have not yet been agreed, the local authority should consider funding the institution on the basis of previous patterns of placements and commissioning, so as to make sure that the staff can remain in employment and be available for when the special provision is needed. Staff in institutions who support vulnerable students should also be available for redeployment if their services are needed elsewhere, or they can provide support in different ways. Co-ordination between institutions, and with local authorities, will be important in arranging this.

Adult education budget (AEB) and advanced learner loans bursary contract for services

For providers funded through a contract for service for AEB and Advanced Learner Loans Bursary, we will remove the financial year controls set out in the [funding and performance management rules for 2019 to 2020](#).

This means we will pay any over delivery in the August 2019 to March 2020 period by utilising the April 2020 to August 2020 period funding, up to the full 12 month contract value. The commitment to fund up to 103% of adult skills and 110% of traineeships contract values will still apply over the full funding year.

2019 to 2020 year-end claims forecast cancelled

The 2019 to 2020 [funding claims guidance](#) requires providers with the allocations listed below to complete a year-end forecast funding claim:

- ESFA AEB - Adult Skills and Community Learning - grant-funded
- ESFA AEB - 19-24 Traineeships (procured)
- Advanced Learner Loans Bursary (ALLB) - grant-funded
- ESFA AEB - Adult Skills Learner Support - paid-on-profile (AEB procured)
- 16 to 19 Education

As part of the ESFA's coronavirus (COVID-19) response, the ESFA will now not require your organisation to complete a year-end claims forecast due in June 2020.

Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), adult education budget (AEB) funding (grant funded providers) and advanced learner loans bursary fund

Year-end reconciliation

For 2019 to 2020 only, the ESFA will not carry out the final reconciliation for grant funded providers in receipt of ESFA funded AEB (adult skills, community learning, learner and learning support and 19 to 24 traineeships) and the advanced learner loans bursary fund. These providers will be funded in line with the current agreement schedule with no clawback.

Providers must:

- continue to deliver learning online wherever possible including for ESFA funded AEB via existing subcontracting arrangements to support existing learners to successfully complete their courses/qualifications or retain evidence where this is not possible
- support furloughed workers to enhance existing or develop new skills

Where it is not possible to deliver online, for example where learning requires physical access to specialist equipment or materials, providers should keep and provide records of where this applies and keep evidence of efforts made to remain in contact with learners and prepare them for a return to learning in the future.

However, there will be exceptions for grant funded providers who had already forecast significant under-delivery in their mid-year returns for ESFA funded AEB and/or advanced learner loans bursary fund, in advance of the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19). ESFA will contact affected providers to discuss their forecasts and potential clawback. We also reserve the right to clawback funds where it can be demonstrated that a grant funded provider has not sought to continue delivery wherever possible online or otherwise, either directly or for ESFA funded AEB through their existing subcontractors.

When planning ESFA funded AEB allocations for 2021 to 2022, we will consider how we set a fair baseline given our default position would have been to use funded delivery in 2019 to 2020.

Advanced learner loans

With regard to advanced learner loans, the Student Loans Company (SLC) will continue to make scheduled fee payments to all providers with a loans facility. Providers must continue to inform the SLC if and when a learner's circumstances change.

Devolved AEB

From 1 August 2019, the AEB is apportioned between the ESFA and 6 mayoral combined authorities (MCAs) and the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the ESFA is no longer accountable for administering AEB in those devolved areas. The MCA or GLA will be responsible for agreeing arrangements with their providers in respect of devolved AEB.

Data collection and recording

Disruption to training

It is our priority to support learners and providers to continue with their learning online during this period, ensuring that where breaks in learning are required, learners are able to resume their 'classroom' learning and continue to a successful completion, while maintaining quality.

Breaks in learning

ESFA funded AEB and advanced learner loans (including bursary fund) funding rules for 2019 to 2020 already make provision for 'breaks in learning' for a range of circumstances.

You and the learner can agree to suspend learning while the learner takes a break. This allows the learner to continue later with the same eligibility that applied when they first started their learning.

We are extending the current breaks in learning rules for ESFA funded AEB and advanced learner loans to:

- allow a break in learning at the learner's request where a learner is self-isolating, or caring for others affected by coronavirus (COVID-19) and is unable to continue by distance learning and/or an online offer
- allow a break in learning to be recorded where a provider is unable to deliver because of the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on their own business and there is no possible delivery by distance and/or online learning

Where some learning aims have been delivered, this should be evidenced in the usual way. However, where a break in learning is now beginning or expected, providers should include these learners in their individualised learner record (ILR) submission and record breaks in learning as starting on the date of the last learning activity for the aim. It is likely that these aims will have been suspended knowing that it will be reviewed at stages over the coming months. Under no circumstances should the current planned end date be changed.

To record breaks in learning for coronavirus (COVID-19) reasons, providers should:

- include these learners in their ILR submissions
- record, retain and submit evidence in the usual way
- record a break in learning in their ILR submission
- ensure that the affected learners are not recorded as permanently withdrawn from their learning, by entering the 'completion status' field of the ILR as '6', denoting that the learner has temporarily withdrawn from learning due to an agreed break in learning as a direct impact of coronavirus (COVID-19)

Further information on data collection is included in [reducing burdens on educational and care settings](#).

Ongoing learning

Due to the need to maintain social distancing, FE providers will continue to deliver much of their provision remotely. Over time, as restrictions are lifted, providers will begin to re-introduce classroom and workshop-based learning. For many learners, this will mean a transition from remote education to blended learning (for example, a combination of remote and traditional classroom, workshop or workplace learning).

Given resources are finite - estate, equipment and staff - the varied needs of different learner groups and courses will need to be balanced, providers will need flexibility in deciding the optimal mix of online and face to face content across their curriculum to maximise learner engagement, support vulnerable learners, and enable the provider as a whole to minimise the transmission risk. Providers will also need to take account of learners who may have family members who are shielding and, in exceptional circumstances, may not be able to physically attend.

Two DfE grant funded organisations - Jisc and The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) – are well-placed to advise and support colleges and staff regarding remote teaching and learning.

Support available includes free content, blogs, and community support. The ETF's Enhance Digital Learning Platform offers free training to teachers in how to use technology to support the continuity of teaching and learning. ETF is also running [webinars for FE providers](#) on how to make the most of online learning.

Providers' strategies for ongoing learning should be informed by the needs of teachers and students, and their respective home teaching and learning environments. Where possible, colleges and other providers should:

- prepare staff on remote education practice through bitesize/refresher training sessions focused on how to use virtual learning environments (VLEs), communication tools and digital and non-digital resources
- use tools already available at your college including physical and digital resources, and how to make use of cloud storage systems (for example, Office 365 or Google G Suite) - ensure staff and students have log-in details and know how to access online content
- provide learners with accessible guides on remote education, focusing on where, when and how they are expected to engage and demonstrate their learning and how assessment and feedback will be delivered - consider how to support disadvantaged learners
- consider provision for partnership working with the relevant agencies (including health and social care) to help ensure support for vulnerable children and children with special educational needs and disabilities
- consider how you will deploy your staff to ensure safeguarding, Prevent and security policies are maintained - the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) [provides guidance](#) on how to work from home while adhering to these policies
- consider lesson capture to allow students to dip in and out of lessons at their own pace
- be sensitive and adaptive to the wellbeing and wellness of both students and teachers, recognising that health and caring responsibilities will disrupt the teaching delivery and learning journey for individuals during the closure period - Jisc has produced a guide to the Digital Wellbeing of Learners which curates a number of resources and guides

We understand that what providers can offer during this period will vary. Some colleges and FE providers have shifted much of their provision online and are delivering classes and other teacher-led activity to a regular timetable. This is excellent practice if it can be reasonably maintained.

The local ESFA teams will also provide support and you can submit enquiries through the ESFA enquiries service.

Richard Atkins, the FE Commissioner (FEC), and his team of highly experienced deputy FECs and FE advisers have offered their services to college leaders that would like to talk through plans, concerns and issues. Our pool of National Leaders of Governance (NLGs) also stand ready to offer any support they can. If you would like to arrange a phone conversation between yourself and a member of the FEC team or an NLG, email [FEC.OPERATIONS@education.gov.uk](#).

We continue to collect examples of good practice and will share these through our usual communications channels.

Support for young people unable to access remote education

On 19 April, the Secretary of State for Education announced new support for schools, colleges and young people to access remote education. 16 to 19 year olds in education without a suitable device and/or connectivity to study remotely, and whose family cannot afford these costs, will be eligible for support via the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund. Providers should consider supporting them, for example, by providing a device where necessary to access remote education.

As set out in 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guidance, decisions on support should continue to be made on the basis of an individual assessment, in line with bursary fund rules that all support must be based on individual circumstances and needs.

Providers should use their existing 16 to 19 Bursary Fund (and any spare resources from their FE free meals grant) to pay for this support. Where providers need additional resources to support young people to access education remotely, they should [submit a business case to the ESFA](#) setting out:

- the amount of bursary fund and/or free meals funding carried forward from previous years
- the amount of funding already spent in the 2019 to 2020 academic year
- the amount of funding already irrevocably committed but not yet spent
- the amount of funding the provider has available to support disadvantaged students, in line with the criteria above
- the number of students assessed as requiring additional support
- the support and funding the provider has assessed is required to support the needs of individual students, in line with the criteria set out in the [16 to 19 Bursary Fund guidance](#)

Local authorities will receive devices for children and young people who have a social worker or are care leavers. 16 to 19 education providers should work with local authorities to ensure that any students in these categories can access education and to ensure that support for them from the local authority and education institution is co-ordinated.

Supporting teachers to continue to deliver

Bringing more learners into FE settings will present new challenges to colleges and other providers. They will want to refocus their teaching staff to support learners to come back into the classroom where this is appropriate and sustain the online offer that they have developed to continue ongoing learning since the decision to close educational settings was taken. The current proposals mean that a relatively small proportion of learners will return to face to face learning in the first instance and remote education will remain the predominant mode of education.

We know that this move will cause concern for some teachers who are following advice to shield themselves or who have family members that are at increased risk. It is essential that in all of their planning, colleges and other providers continue to implement government advice on supporting those who have risk factors which put them in the clinically extremely vulnerable or vulnerable risk groups. Teachers who fall into these categories should continue to be supported to take appropriate steps to protect themselves and their families including remaining at home should they need to.

Colleges and other providers will be planning how they can best reintroduce more learners into their premises alongside those vulnerable learners and children of critical workers who are already present on-site. We know that there will be aspects of provision that cause concern to teachers, for example, the use of limited space in classrooms or workshops for teaching or specific assessments of learners' competence. The [guidance on social distancing](#) will help colleges and other providers to make decisions about how to deploy teachers to minimise risk on their premises and when they are delivering face to face teaching or undertaking assessments that require practical demonstration.

We are confident that providers will be able to make this transition work for their learners and staff, so that education can continue to be delivered in the most effective and safe way. [Specific guidance for educational settings](#) on social distancing and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) will continue to be updated and should be used alongside this advice. What is most important is getting the balance right between the need for learners and teachers to be present on-site and making the best use of online teaching and learning. Any additional costs arising from increasing numbers of learners will be funded from existing college budgets.

Colleges and other providers will also be seeking to recruit new teachers to fill existing vacancies and support delivery in future. We know that this will be a challenge in the current circumstances, particularly as teacher recruitment often includes a demonstration of teaching in the classroom, however, we are confident that providers can find ways to recruit teachers using online delivery and other assessment methods where appropriate.

Providers can still register for round 3 of the [Taking Teaching Further programme](#) which is intended to support the recruitment of industry professionals to teaching roles in the FE sector. For those seeking support to recruit English, maths or SEND teachers we are still accepting applications for [In-service ITE grants](#) of £18,200, which are available directly from the department.

We have also provided advice to FE Initial Teacher Education providers to mitigate the disruption to teacher training where possible and enabling as many new teachers as possible to complete their training where they have demonstrated they have met the required standard. This will mean that there will still be a cohort of newly qualified teachers able to take up employment for the coming academic year.

Support from your provider associations

Provider associations are also offering information and links to resources via their websites:

- [Association of Colleges (AoC)](#) can offer support and advice with questions relating to business continuity at [covid19@aoc.co.uk](#). AoC has also published [guidance on governance](#)
- [Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP)](#) has collated guidance and support
- [Holex](#) has produced a checklist for partially closing or closing an adult education centre
- [Natspec](#) is updating a regular briefing page
- [Sixth Form Colleges Association (SFCA)](#) has an [online learning hub](#) with resources that will be updated on a regular basis

Traineeship flexibilities

The current coronavirus (COVID-19) situation means that many trainees are not able to carry out the work placement element of the programme due to social distancing measures and employers being closed or having "work at home" arrangements that are not suitable for trainees.

We want to enable providers to continue to deliver where possible given traineeships will play an important part in re-engaging and supporting young people to get back into learning and work following the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

These are temporary flexible measures that apply from 23 March 2020 when social distancing measures were introduced that prevent learners from undertaking work placement activity. Where flexibilities are used, providers should record this and retain it as evidence for audit purposes.

New trainees can start programmes during this period with programme aims adjusted in line with these flexibilities.

Reduced work experience duration

The unprecedented impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) has meant that it is currently extremely difficult for providers to continue to organise and deliver work placements within traineeships. We are therefore relaxing the required work placement duration.

If the trainee has completed more than 70 work experience hours **and** the provider is satisfied that the learner has gained sufficient work skills, then providers can record the work experience learning aim as complete within the ILR and census returns during this temporary period of coronavirus (COVID-19) social distancing measures. This should be evidenced in the learner file. The trainee should continue with other traineeship learning aims via alternative methods such as online learning in order to complete these elements of their traineeship.

If the trainee has completed less than 70 work experience hours, or the provider is not satisfied with their progression, given these exceptional and unprecedented circumstances, providers will not be penalised for not delivering the required 100 hours for this academic year.

Providers should demonstrate how they have continued to support trainees to develop their work experience skills in the absence of a work placement in the learner file and we may ask for this evidence through monitoring processes. Activities we would expect to continue to go ahead:

- preparing students for work and/or work placements through alternative distance and online training that develops their skills for work
- continuing to build relationships with employers and developing engagement strategies for different industries for apprenticeships and employment
- developing traineeship content that aligns with apprenticeship provision to facilitate smooth transitions from traineeship to apprenticeship
- developing matching processes for when students can go on placements again

These are temporary flexible measures that apply while learners are unable to undertake work placement activity due to social distancing measures.

Extended programme duration up to 12 months

It is our priority to enable providers to support learners to continue with their learning online during this period until trainees are able to complete their traineeship.

During this period, providers can extend the traineeship programme duration up to 12 months where one or more of the following scenarios applies:

- the learner has not completed their qualification and basic skills learning aims including employability, maths or English
- the learner has completed less than 70 planned work experience hours
- the provider has assessed the learner as needing further work placement hours to complete this element of their traineeship

This flexibility is offered on the basis that the trainee undertakes online or alternative distance learning to complete other non-work experience learning and/or alternative work experience learning part of the traineeship where online learning is possible.

Where flexibilities are used, providers should record this and retain it as evidence for audit purposes.

Providers delivering traineeships funded by ESFA AEB can also refer to the [breaks in learning](#) section for coronavirus (COVID-19) related breaks in traineeship learning.

Impact on benefit claimants for extended programmes

People receiving benefits do not have to attend Jobcentre appointments for 3 months, starting from Thursday 19 March 2020. People will continue to receive their benefits as normal, but all requirements to attend the Jobcentre in person are suspended. People can still make applications for benefits online if they are eligible. Trainees in receipt of benefits should not attend the Jobcentre unless directed to do so for an exceptional purpose.

Benefit claimants therefore are eligible to participate in longer spells of learning in accordance with extending traineeship duration as part of this guidance - where the learning forms part of their traineeship, and where there are clear advantages in doing so, in relation to a claimant's future job goals.

For more information see [employment and benefits support](#).

Extending 16 to 19 study programme traineeships

Our funding guidance sets out that planned hours should not be changed after the qualifying period unless correcting an error or starting a new study programme in-year. However, we recognise that in the current circumstances some students may need more hours than originally planned in order to complete their traineeship programme.

Where learners need longer than originally planned to complete their traineeship programme, we expect, in most cases, stretching their existing planned hours over a longer duration should provide the flexibility providers need.

In exceptional circumstances, where a learner with part-time hours requires significant

In exceptional circumstances, where a learner with part time hours requires significant extra delivery, while they are unable to deliver work experience with an employer, providers can increase the planned hours. Providers should record where an increase of planned hours is required in the learner file and demonstrate the need for increased hours to ensure learners remain engaged. We may ask for this evidence through monitoring processes.

The planned end date must not under any circumstances be changed or extended within the ILR. Providers should continue to record the end date of the programme using ‘Learning Actual End Date’.

We expect providers to arrange alternative provision to cover the delivery that cannot take place. The alternative delivery needs to be above the already planned work experience hours as these cannot be funded again within the same time period.

This is a temporary measure that applies only in this period of social distancing and while students are not able to access work placement activity.

Extending 19 to 24 adult education budget and 16 to 18 traineeships without 16 to 19 study programme funding

Where learners need longer than originally planned to complete their traineeship, programme providers should stretch their existing planned learning aims over a longer duration.

The planned end date must not under any circumstances be changed or extended within the ILR. Providers should continue to record the end date of the programme using ‘Learning Actual End Date’.

Additional funding demand in 2020 to 2021, as a result of the programme’s actual end date extending from the original planned end date in 2019 to 2020, may impact on the availability of growth in 2020 to 2021 if there is not sufficient budget available to support demand. It is your responsibility to ensure you meet the cost of trainees that continue into the following year within your funding year allocation.

This is a temporary measure that applies only in this period of social distancing and while students are not able to access work placement activity.

For more information, see the traineeship addendum to the ESFA adult education budget funding rules 2019 to 2020.

Supported internships

Where the core aim of a student’s supported internship has not been met due to the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19), students will be able to complete their internship in the next academic year. Each student should be assessed to determine the necessary duration of this extension, and an appropriate planned number of hours agreed. Supported internship providers will need to enrol the young person onto a new study programme, but it is not envisaged that all students will require a further full year programme.

The new study programme will be funded through the usual funding routes. The normal ESFA processes will be followed and payments will be issued through the usual lagged funding system – therefore affecting the allocations under the 16 to 19 funding formula to be issued for the academic year 2021 to 2022. In addition, all providers should continue to record their school census and ILR data and ESFA will take into consideration in-year growth calculations and any adjustments in the normal way.

Any requirement for high needs funding should be discussed with the relevant local authority, in accordance with the current high needs operational guidance. Students regarded as having high needs will occupy places funded at £6,000 per place (£10,000 per place in special schools) in the normal way, and the funding for any students occupying unfunded places should be handled in accordance with the current high needs operational guide.

Applications from local authorities for a relaxation of the normal rules for continuing financial support to schools of all kinds for students aged 19 and over will be considered under the established ESFA process, if students need to remain on the roll of the school to complete their supported internship in the new academic year.

Examinations and assessments

No exams will be taking place in schools and FE providers this summer.

Our priority is to ensure that learners and adult learners can move on as planned to the next stage of their lives, including starting university, college or sixth form courses, or apprenticeships in the autumn or getting a job or progressing in work.

Learners who were due to sit A level, AS level or GCSE exams this summer will receive a calculated grade, wherever possible. Ofqual has set out how this will work in guidance on awarding GCSE, AS and A levels. Ofqual has also consulted on proposals for an autumn exam series.

There is a very wide range of vocational and technical qualifications as well as other qualifications for which learners were expecting to undertake final assessment and/or sit exams this summer. These are offered by a large number of awarding organisations and have differing assessment approaches.

Ofqual has set out how learners taking these qualifications should be issued with results. Centres should work closely with awarding organisations over the coming weeks and months to enable results to be issued.

The priority is to ensure that as many learners as possible receive results and every effort should be made to issue valid and reliable results to learners this summer. Delivery of adapted assessments or calculated results should not be withheld where it is possible to offer them, even where centres have reopened.

As far as possible, vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs), and other general qualifications that are not GCSEs, AS or A levels, used for progression to higher and further education will be treated in a similar way to GCSEs, AS and A levels, with learners receiving a calculated result. Similarly, learners due to take assessments for Functional Skills qualifications between March and 31 July will receive a calculated result.

For other qualifications, adapting assessment may be a more appropriate approach.

For some qualifications, for example those which signal occupational competence, adapting assessments may not be appropriate and assessment may need to be delayed.

Delaying of assessment should be a last resort. Where assessments have been identified as needing to be delayed, they should be delivered as soon as is practically possible.

The phased reopening of centres may provide an opportunity for assessments to be delivered that would otherwise be delayed.

Autumn assessment opportunities should be provided where there is demand and it is practical to do so. Awarding organisations will work with providers as they develop their plans for autumn windows.

As part of supporting the exceptional arrangements for assessment and grading of vocational and technical qualifications and other general qualifications which Ofqual has announced, Ofqual has confirmed it will extend the regulation end date for legacy Functional Skills qualifications in English and Mathematics to 31 December 2020. This is to allow learners who are currently on these qualifications, but who are yet to take some assessments, an opportunity to complete their qualification. Once Ofqual has confirmed the certification end date has been extended on the Register of regulated qualification, we will similarly extend the validity and funding end dates for these qualifications for continuing learners on the Learning Aims Reference Service (LARs). It remains the case that new starts of these qualifications is not permitted.

We are aware that currently, some awarding organisations (AOs) are not issuing formal certificates for learners who have achieved qualifications. We recognise the need for this to be the case as a result of logistical impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19), on AOs and consider completion confirmation emails to be a valid recognition of a learners’ completion of their qualification. The hard copy qualification certificate will be dispatched when the AO is able to do this. These completion confirmation emails should also show learner details, certification run date and unique number.

Ofqual and AOs are working through the detail, with further information to be issued in the coming days and weeks.

Regulation, accountability and audit

We have suspended routine Ofsted inspections and FE Commissioner Intervention visits and non-critical ESFA intervention. The Secretary of State for Education has allowed Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector to do this.

Guidance from Ofsted has confirmed that urgent inspections where specific concerns have been raised can still go ahead. This will allow Ofsted to prioritise the immediate safety of young people where necessary.

Qualification achievement rates

As part of steps taken to fight the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), the government announced that all exams due to take place in schools and colleges in England in summer 2020 are cancelled, and that it will not publish any school or college level educational performance data based on tests, assessments or exams for 2020.

We will not hold schools/colleges to account on the basis of exams and assessment data from summer 2020 and data will not be used by others, such as Ofsted and local authorities, to hold schools/colleges to account. Further information can be found at coronavirus (COVID-19): school and college performance measures.

Audit

Prior to the Prime Minister’s announcement of the new coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions on Monday 23 March 2020, we made the decision to pause the start of any new routine funding audits for all post-16 providers for the short term, as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. We have now extended this pause to cover the period for, at least, the duration of the lockdown.

Where funding audits and investigations were already in progress, we have sought to complete the work, taking into account providers’ capacity to resolve any issues. We understand the challenges providers face as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and have been sensitive to these challenges when contacting providers.

It may be necessary for the ESFA to contact providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in order to continue to maintain effective oversight and protection of public funds. Where such contact is necessary, we will continue to be sensitive to the challenges providers face as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19).

We will continue to monitor and review the situation in light of the circumstances. When the coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions are reduced and there is a return to office-based working across the country, we will assess when it is appropriate to restart routine funding audits.

Alternative evidence for wet signatures

This guidance applies to evidence for learners who are funded through apprenticeship, 16 to 19 education, adult education budget (AEB) and advanced learner loans funding rules.

It is expected that where providers already have a digital/electronic signature process, they must continue to utilise their existing processes in accordance with the respective funding rules above for 16 to 19, adults and apprenticeship learners.

A wet signature is created when a person physically ‘marks’ a document. Where a provider has no digital or electronic systems and processes in place to capture a learner or employer signature, then under normal circumstances a wet signature is required for recruitment and evidence of continuing learning.

It is recognised that providers delivering training and/or recruiting learners during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak will experience difficulty in obtaining learner and employer wet signatures. Therefore, for the funded programmes listed above, where providers do not have systems and processes in place for electronic/digital signatures, during the coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions, we will allow confirmation/evidence to be obtained through email as detailed below.

For the purpose of audit evidence, we expect a record of acknowledgement or adoption of a genuine electronic message or document. Acceptable alternative evidence includes:

- an email from the learner and/or employer email address with details of the confirmation and their typed name at the end of the message
- a typed name on an electronic form or document emailed from the learner and/or employer
- a signed scanned document attached to an email from the learner and/or employer
- a photo taken on a camera/digital medium of the signed document attached to an email from the learner and/or employer

We are allowing providers to use this type of electronic confirmation (as detailed above) during the period of restrictions due to coronavirus (COVID-19) only where no other usable digital or electronic processes exist. This is not to be used as alternative evidence as part of the provider’s business as usual process once the coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions are lifted.

Following the period of coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions, providers using the above alternative evidence must resume their usual process for obtaining wet signatures on relevant documentation. Providers must ensure that all alternative evidence replacing wet signatures received during the coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions is genuine and irrefutable, and the evidence is retained for audit purposes.

Governance

Holding meetings online or by telephone

Some FE and sixth form college corporations, and other providers which are charities, may not be able to make amendments to their governing documents to allow for board meetings online or by telephone, rather than face to face. We recommend following the Charity Commission advice to record your decision to proceed with other ways of meeting in the interests of good governance.

Using reserves and restricted funds

We recommend that FE and sixth form college corporations, together with other providers which are charities, read the Charity Commission guidance on using reserves to cope with the current crisis. The guidance also tells you about the limitations on using any restricted funds.

European Social Fund

For European Social Fund (ESF) provision, the following easements have been agreed.

Delivery postcode for remote education

The managing authority has confirmed that where delivery is occurring remotely, ESF providers can now use the postcode of their physical base within the local enterprise partnership (LEP) area relating to the contract as the delivery postcode recorded on the ILR. This means that where remote delivery is taking place that is now falling outside the LEP area relating to the contract, it will be considered eligible.

Evidencing remote enrolment and remote education

Currently, projects must have wet signatures from participants, on both enrolment forms and any contact sheets, demonstrating they are in receipt of support and to declare relevant information. The ESF managing authority recognises that this is not possible given current social distancing measures. Therefore, ESF providers can, from 1 February 2020, provide participant verification by alternative means, such as email.

28 day progression requirement

It is a requirement of the ESF programme, that all programme progression related deliverables are achieved within 28 days of leaving the ESF programme. This timeline starts when all ESF funded intervention/activity has ceased. Providers may wish to consider how they utilise non-regulated activity to continue to engage and support learners regularly during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Contract extensions

It is still our intention to extend ESF contracts to March 2023, where funding is available and with consideration to contract performance. It is planned to action this as part of the April 2020 performance management process. This is currently in development, along with the associated timelines which we will share as soon as possible. We are proposing to implement a simplified and streamlined process to minimise the burden and input required from the provider base during this challenging period.

External audit testing

The Government Internal Audit Agency (AS GIAA the ESF Audit Authority (AA)), has agreed that all provider level (AA based) audit testing, relating to ESF provision, funded by the ESFA, will be temporarily paused until the current restrictions are lifted. This extends beyond physical visits to cover remote audit testing approaches, based on the wider potential impacts. We will update providers in due course regarding the resumption of this work, as it continues to constitute a key requirement within the current regulatory framework.

Compliance and performance reviews

Compliance and performance visits (unless previously agreed) have been suspended until further notice. This is in recognition of the difficulties in accessing physical documentation and premises currently.

Broader support to the community

Further education providers are major community institutions and have greater capacity and organisational resilience than smaller schools.

We know a number of colleges have already taken steps to support vulnerable learners or the children of critical workers who can’t be supported elsewhere.

This is a hugely valuable contribution; colleges have a vital role to play in holding communities together and supporting our broader national response to coronavirus (COVID-19).

Remember that, if your organisation is a charity, any help you provide for the national effort must be consistent with your organisation’s charitable purposes. If your organisation is a registered charity, see the Charity Commission guidance on how charities can help while keeping within their objects.

FE and sixth form college corporations which are helping the national effort in ways other than education, such as giving surplus food to a food bank or allowing critical workers to use unoccupied student accommodation, are to be applauded for contributing in this way. Governors must be satisfied that such assistance is in their corporation’s interests and does not create additional risk or significant one-off or ongoing costs to the corporation, and should record the basis for their decision.

Toolkit for engaging vulnerable young people

We have collected examples from providers who are successfully engaging vulnerable young people: both keeping in contact to ensure vulnerable young people working remotely are safe and engaging vulnerable young people in learning.

This information is intended to provide an opportunity for colleges and other providers to learn from each other’s emerging practice and develop their approach to engaging vulnerable learners in education.

Keeping in contact with vulnerable learners

Providers have found that the most effective method of communication can vary by learner, but could take place via telephone, video call, email, text or social media. In some cases, providers have reported that social media has been more effective than traditional channels, although appropriate safeguards must be applied.

Case study 1

The Education Training Collective have sustained a 100% engagement rate with vulnerable learners by their welfare and safeguarding teams, meaning that all vulnerable learners have remained in contact with the college throughout the lockdown. The welfare and safeguarding teams engage in weekly contact with vulnerable learners using many forms of communication: MS Teams, emails, text and phone calls. All feedback is then shared with relevant staff and the respective local authority. Safeguarding officers focus on ensuring that there is a multiagency approach to supporting learners in care, including holding virtual meetings with the local authority and key professionals.

Case study 2

Hugh Baird 14 to16 College has focused on having named Teaching and Learning Assistants (TLAs), who learners know from college already, regularly contact vulnerable learners. Learners are expected to be online at specific times for each subject, and attendance is chased by telephone contact from the TLA.

Vulnerable learners are also monitored by Tier 2 support, non-teaching support staff with specific roles around supporting the young people, and Tier 2 support may get in contact with vulnerable learners and their parents/carers about specific issues. Tier 2 staff can also pull in wider college support as needed. The effective use of an online platform (Microsoft Teams) ensures prompt & efficient communication between staff. As a result of this system, Hugh Baird 14 to16 College has been able to keep in touch with most vulnerable learners.

Andy Howard (Director of Curriculum, Young People), who devised the model said “the most important element of our work is to support and be there for our learners and in particular the vulnerable learners. The tiered model ensures all learners know that there is someone there who knows them and will support them as best we can.”

Case study 3

Nacro Education has responded effectively to the needs of our learner’s utilising a highly individualised set of blended learning interventions, including daily calls, hard-copy packs and online sessions. Nacro is currently working with a learner who is high needs with an EHCP and subject to a Youth Referral Order from the court. Over the last few weeks, there have been challenges in maintaining engagement and support. The main focus of our involvement has been around safeguarding him from participating in risk-taking behaviours or offending behaviours, which has involved regular contact with the Youth Offending Service, children’s services and with his mum to ensure she also has the support to be able to keep him in the home. The mum has thanked us for the support for this wellbeing and staying on track with learning, and said that this contact has also helped her mental wellbeing.

Case study 4

In addition to remaining open to vulnerable learners, Blackpool and The Fylde College (B&FC) undertake a weekly wellbeing call with all of their vulnerable learners and this is closely monitored. This practice has been in place since 24 March to support and safeguard the most vulnerable during this public health emergency.

The college has been able to maintain regular contact with the vast majority of their vulnerable learners. However, if contact is not established in any one week, the college undertakes a risk assessment and where appropriate conducts a home visit to check on the wellbeing of the student. If the vulnerable student has a social worker, it is also escalated to them to promote a holistic approach to safeguarding. The loop is closed the following week to ensure this triangulated approach is highly effective and no one slips through the net.

Nigel Brown, Director for Learners, said “The approach B&FC has adopted has been to prioritise the most vulnerable in these challenging times. Partnership working has been key in developing new systems that work across agencies to fully support our most vulnerable learners. I am genuinely proud of the swift adoption of new working practices demonstrating our continued commitment to outstanding student support and safeguarding”.

Some providers have put in place emergency phone numbers or email addresses for learners to use.

Some providers have found that bulk texts or messages may be an effective tool for keeping in contact with vulnerable learners and prompting engagement.

Innovative approaches to the delivery of remote education

Some providers have found that the creation of a virtual timetable can create structure and routine that may help vulnerable learners to engage.

Recorded classes enable learners to learn at a time that is convenient for them, which is particularly important for young parents and learners with caring responsibilities.

Some providers have used Microsoft Teams to create transcripts to ensure videos are accessible, and some providers have used direct video link ups to enable communication support work to continue to interpret lessons for learners with hearing impairments.

Case study 5

London South East Colleges has found that working remotely is a significant challenge when it comes to developing the communication skills of its most complex and vulnerable learners. Key to its approach has been the provision of emotional support for learners and their families. Feeling relaxed, safe and supported is crucial if young people are to continue developing skills within their home environment.

The team’s focus has been on contacting parents to provide them with a clear record of the progress their child has made this term and any outstanding goals. This includes ideas of how these goals can be met and sharing ways in which parents can encourage their child’s ongoing development. Response from families has been positive, with some requesting further information and asking for additional support. Many families are thankful for the insight into their child’s progress and appreciative of London South East Colleges’ forward planning for when things finally return to ‘normal’.

Case study 6

Skills Training UK promotes social mobility through apprenticeships and traineeships and continues to work with significant numbers of vulnerable learners with low levels of prior attainment. Skills Training UK have retained interest in both programmes through the accelerated development of a hybrid online learning, incorporating online lessons and interactive materials with live classroom delivery via webinar and 1-2-1 reviews undertaken by dedicated Trainer Assessors (Apprenticeships) and Tutors (Traineeships and Study Programme).

This approach has been welcomed by those vulnerable learners in regular attendance and at this point, their attendance rates on their courses remain consistent at around 74 to 78% depending on the subject area and courses being undertaken. Skills Training UK hopes that all learners will reflect the following feedback received last year: “I had a bad upbringing, lost my mother and didn’t pass my GCSEs. I enjoyed the course at Skills Training UK and was really happy with the Distinction. I’m proud of myself and a lot more confident now. I’m looking forward to the future.”

Providing additional support for vulnerable learners

Providers are considering how to help vulnerable learners that may be struggling to engage with remote education; some of these young people may need additional support.

Some providers have staff members, including IT staff, available to remotely answer question whilst learners engage in online learning, which can prevent learners disengaging.

Case study 7

South Devon High School, part of South Devon College, offers direct provision for 14 to 16 year olds. To support vulnerable young people that are struggling to engage with online learning, South Devon High School is using ‘academic coaches’ to provide daily support. These coaches work with the learner and their family to set small, realistic goals and can provide academic support such as giving feedback on work. This includes maintaining face to face contact through Microsoft Teams to maintain a personalised approach to support learners’ academically and pastorally. Academic coaches can also act as a go between for the learner and their teachers, signalling where learners might need extra academic support. This has resulted in a large increase in the online engagement of these vulnerable learners.

Case study 8

Nacro Education is working with looked after learners and care leavers to put in place social, emotional and developmental support alongside learning activities during what might be a very isolating time.

Nacro is taking a multi-agency approach to working with a learner in care. Nacro is in regular contact with the learner’s support worker and this forms part of the personal and social development checks. Nacro has also been in contact with the city council to help provide him with ICT resources for learning so he can keep up with his course, and with the Youth Offending Team (YOT) to share updates on progress and report any concerns. Nacro is also working as part of a multi-agency team to support the learner with his anxiety and other problems that have resulted from a lack of social contact during the lockdown.

Case study 9

At Walsall College, Safeguarding and Counselling Teams are supporting a high number of vulnerable students during the lockdown period. Students who have been identified as vulnerable are RAG rated by risk and contact is made according to this risk. Students with high risk have the highest frequency of contact, either daily or every other day, those with medium risk have contact twice a week and those with the lowest risk have contact weekly. There are two qualified counsellors who abide by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy. During the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, the college’s counselling services have continued via telephone counselling; appointments are being held with students throughout the day, 5 days per week.

Supporting learners with SEND

Many providers have put in place specific support for learners with SEND.

Case study 10

The Weston College Inclusive Practice Team have produced a full timetable of weekly activities for their learners with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) and have found that levels of engagement have been high through the virtual platform. The new virtual timetable of activities is running Monday-Friday (9:30 to 3:30) and mirror, as closely as possible, the previous ‘in-college’ curriculum.

An example of one of these sessions involved learners and staff being taken through a virtual fitness workout and a virtual cooking session. A live demo walked the learners through a task to cook boiled eggs on toast for breakfast. The virtual timetable has been delivered using a range of methods (for example, video, text and voice) and has played a vital role in keeping learners with SEND engaged in remote education.

Case study 11

Derby College Group are supporting their learners with SEND to manage online learning and their transition to further study or progression. The college has worked with the learners and their support network to put in place personalised, realistic and meaningful targets that enable learners to continue to progress towards their EHCP or wider study programme goals. Progress is tracked in online teaching sessions for some and via tutorial conversations, photo and video evidence. Achievements are celebrated. All learners have tailored communication plans in place, with some students with complex needs having an additional support contact at several points each week. Derby College Group has had very positive feedback from learners and parents about the personalised learning and wellbeing support the college has put in place.

Case study 12

City College Norwich has had some vulnerable students and students of key workers on-site throughout lockdown. The college has also prepared for providing face to face contact for other students and children in the nursery in June. The college has individual risk assessments and actions to ensure that they stay safe whilst opening for more staff and students.

City College Norwich has been engaging their remote learners with SEND via regular remote timetabled classes 2 or 3 times a week during lockdown. Breakout functions enable tutors to provide additional support to learners that need it, and British Sign Language signers are actively engaged. Students have worksheets and interactive activities sent out weekly. For those without IT access, the college is sending printed packs of work in the post and keeping in contact via phone. Specialist support workers are supporting learners with SEND and their parents remotely.

The supported interns are brushing up on their employability skills with help from their job coaches. They are taking this opportunity to fine tune their CVs and to practice job searching and interview skills development through online platforms. For many students, this has helped them develop their speech and language skills as well as building confidence in communicating and engaging with people in different ways. Once restrictions are lifted students will be able to continue with placements at their supported internship. For those students who haven't gained employment by the end of the academic year, City College Norwich will explore how to potentially extend current employer placements or refer students to the college's supported employment agency.

Case study 13

Activate delivers personalised educational and vocational programmes for young adults with learning difficulties and disabilities. To support learners to continue to progress towards their EHCP outcomes, Activate has set up a YouTube channel to try and recreate the normal timetable remotely. The videos on the YouTube channel are supported by a pack of resources delivered either online or physically, including adapted equipment where necessary. Activate has also supported around 15 learners with high sensory needs to buy specific apps that support their learning.

The college is providing education guidance to parents, which can include signposting to outreach services. Staff communicate weekly to ensure parents and learners wellbeing is also supported.

Increasing attendance in FE colleges and other providers: a checklist

On 11 May, we published guidance on a phased wider opening of schools, colleges and nurseries and setting out actions for education and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening. Because the transmission rate of coronavirus (COVID-19) has decreased, we are asking colleges and other providers to prepare to offer some face-to-face support to eligible learners to supplement their remote education from the week commencing 15 June, subject to the government's 5 tests being met. Remote education should remain the predominant mode of education during this time. To help reduce the risks of transmission, a quarter of 16 to 19 learners (including vulnerable learners and the children of critical workers) in the first year of a 2-year study programme, will be able to attend further education settings at any one time. We are therefore asking providers to plan on this basis.

Provision would also continue for:

- vulnerable learners (as defined)
- children of critical workers (as defined)

This checklist is intended to provide support to colleges preparing their short term response to increasing attendance and face-to-face contact for some groups of learners. The list is not exclusive and should be seen as a set of guiding principles for college leaders and governing bodies to assist their decision making when approving their detailed plans for extending attendance of learners in their college. The checklist outlines considerations that need to be taken account of in order to ensure that appropriate assessment of risk has been taken to secure the safety of learners and staff, as well as ensuring that due consideration has been given to any wider impact on the college's area and community.

Implementation of the checklist may have financial implications, care must be exercised to ensure these are taken into account with due regard for the impact on the college's overall budget and financial position. Regular updates should be provided to the Education and Skills Funding Agency ESFA territorial teams as appropriate.

Given the varied nature of colleges, it is not possible for the government to be prescriptive and provide a blueprint that could apply to every college. A tailored approach, within these guiding principles, will be required to ensure an approach that is practicable, safe and which meets, as far as is possible, the needs of the learners, staff and wider community. This guidance will not be exhaustive and there may be particular circumstances which necessitate the consideration of factors not covered here.

It is recognised that many college leaders and boards have already been scenario planning for this eventuality, taking measures to risk assess and prepare in general terms, whilst awaiting further detail of proposals. This guidance aims to further assist preparations.

Guidance documents that this should be read in conjunction with are:

- Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care
- Supporting vulnerable children and young people during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak
- Keeping children safe in education
- Coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers
- Implementing protective measures in education childcare settings
- Information for parents and carers

Colleges should also be aware of support and advice that may be available from trade associations, and the Health and Safety Executive.

Checklist theme	Key consideration	Notes
1.0 **Governance and leadership**	Ensure that there is a comprehensive plan for enabling a quarter of 16 to 19 learners in key assessment years to attend further education settings at any one time, including vulnerable learners and children of critical workers. Ensure an associated risk assessment is in place. The plan should be approved by the governing body and should also be endorsed by the Head of Health and Safety at the college.	Governing bodies will need to demonstrate that they have acted appropriately and have taken due account of health and safety matters
1.1	Consider establishing a coronavirus (COVID-19) governance and leadership group which meets regularly to monitor the board approved plan and consider any required adjustments and/or circumstances that may have arisen that require an immediate policy response. The group's membership, role and relationship to the full board should be agreed by the board, along with regular reporting protocols	This group would monitor progress against the plan and be advised of decisions that may be required to be taken by the Principal and senior leadership team SLT. It should include the Head of Health and Safety and the designated safeguarding lead. The group needs to consider financial implications and direct as appropriate. Consider extending the role of the Health and Safety committee and their responsibility. Provide a clear line of accountability for decision making.
1.2	Ensure that there is regular communication with all essential external key contacts and, in particular, those that are required to enable the safe delivery of the plan for increased numbers of learners attending.	For example, the local authority and their coronavirus (COVID-19) task groups which are likely to include the local NHS, the local authority designated officer (LADO), transport companies, catering companies ESFA.
1.3	Ensure there is clarity regarding named on-site leadership for decision making, with a nominated individual each day where the CEO/principal is not in college.	Likely to be a member of the SLT and/or the Head of Health and Safety where the CEO/principal is not present.
1.4	Ensure that there is a mechanism in place to record and monitor the costs of implementation of the plan for increased numbers of learners attending.	The cost of increased numbers of learners attending will need to be monitored and reviewed
2.0 **Learners and Learning**	Clarify the numbers of learners who will be returning (ensuring only a quarter of 16 to 19 learners in key assessment are in further education settings at any one time, including priority groups), plan for their likely additional and/or enhanced wellbeing/pastoral support needs (for example counselling) and identify resources required.	Consider options/alternatives for residential and other learners where daily travel is impractical and returning to live on-site is either too high risk or is not acceptable to learners. Consider options for staggered/reduced attendance across the week and providing learners with a combination of taught sessions at college and remote education. Consider liaison/communication strategy with local neighbours/business
2.1	Agree what returning support is available for vulnerable and/or disadvantaged learners, updating the safeguarding arrangements and policy where required.	Agree ongoing approach for learning offer for vulnerable young people and children of critical workers who are not in the returning eligible cohorts. Make appropriate use of bursary/student support funds.
2.2	Put in place provision for the return of learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)	Maintain close contact with the local authority
2.3	Plan for how to keep students in groups that are as small as possible and that mix as little as possible with other groups	Consider as part of risk assessment
2.4	Consider how and where food can be available - minimising the need for learners to visit central refectory/canteen facilities/ and ensuring any queues can be avoided or socially distanced	Review access / safe use of vending machines. Retention and application of meal voucher scheme; breakfast clubs
2.5	Communicate plans and behavioural expectations to learners (and carers/social workers/ guardians/ parents as appropriate) and review strategies to ensure these are adhered to, with appropriate responses to non-compliance	Update any behavioural policy. Increase the level of supervision/security to ensure learners maintain social distancing. Consider the benefit of online induction resources for staff and learners returning to college. Note that some learners will need this to be communicated in an accessible format/ will need support to understand the plans/ expectations
2.6	Undertake a comprehensive review of travel and transport arrangements and advice for learners, especially capacity and social distancing requirements, to ensure that the use of public transport to travel to and from education settings is avoided where possible and where it is totally necessary, should not be during peak times. The Department for Transport has produced guidance for passengers who need to travel during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.	Due consideration of the wider implication in the community of where this will place demand on public transport/ parking/ and any required revisions to college transport arrangement. Liaise with your local authority where transport is provided for young people with EHCPs. Implications of new arrangements for safeguarding.
2.7	Any residential provision necessary for returning learners will need to be appropriately risk assessed, with measures taken to address and limit the use of any communal areas, ensuring social distancing and appropriate levels of cleaning.	Clear guidance will be required for learners to advise on safe behaviours in their leisure time/ ways to limit their social contacts
2.8	Issue clear guidance for learners coming into college to move straight to classrooms and limit any congregation points	Consider guidance for learners on private study arrangements during free periods. Review policy on tutorials and large gatherings on campus. Note that some learners will need this to be communicated in an accessible format/will need support to understand the plans/ expectations
2.9	Agree remote education offer/options for eligible learners who can't attend college	
2.10	Ensure attendance recording and monitoring processes are in place and capture as appropriate any learners absent due to coronavirus symptoms	
2.11	Consideration of policies on learners and staff attending college where they are living with people who fall into clinically vulnerable categories - see guidance to implement protective measures.	
2.12	Impact assessment on learners with protected characteristics	
2.13	Understanding of policies and approach to testing of learners for coronavirus (COVID-19)	
3.0 **A safe environment**	Steps to ensure risks are minimised - enhanced hygiene care and limited movement: entry/exit points, classroom layout, ensuring learners stay in the same, small groups as far as possible, corridor management, staggered start and end and break times, toilet use/cleaning, use of communal areas minimised, arrangements in place to facilitate more regular hand washing, including on arrival and before eating and covering soap / running water and hand sanitisers in key places and classrooms. Reminders to students and internal communications to promote regular hand washing, arrangements for the very small number of cases where personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies will be needed: if your staff provide intimate care for any children or young people and for cases where a child or young person becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) while in their setting and needs direct personal care until they can return home	Guidance 'Steps to limit risk in educational settings' should be noted. Nominated first aiders training updated. Ensuring external essential service providers are operating, for example, sanitary products
3.1	Review building(s) capacity from social distancing perspective	Strategies to manage classroom layout and corridors connecting learning spaces
3.2	Reconfigure timetabling, patterns of attendance and delivery methodology for any face to face delivery to facilitate: small group sizes, reduced student movement around campus, reduced contacts overall and avoid learners using public transport at peak times.	Consideration of ways to limit movement/social contacts and demands on public transport
3.3	Update health and safety policy and conduct revised coronavirus (COVID-19) specific risk assessments of areas particularly facilities/provision where physical contact is normally involved (for example, beauty therapy, sport). An amended fire and evacuation procedure needs to be in place.	Ensure changes to policies are clearly communicated to staff.
3.4	Reconfiguring room and equipment layout to ensure social distancing	
3.5	Enhanced cleaning schedules and procedures for shared equipment/workshops	
3.6	Arrangements regarding PPE need to be put in place as appropriate - see guidance to implement protective measures.	Particular consideration may be required for learning support assistants attached to learners needing personal/medical care
3.7	Clarity as to how safety measures and priorities will be displayed/messaged across campus	
3.8	Check that all suppliers and subcontractors (transport providers/grounds maintenance etc) are following appropriate social distancing and hygiene measures	
3.9	Appropriate planning in case someone falls ill on-site/or becomes ill after having been on-site.	Clear contingency plans should be considered to respond to situations where staff or learners on-site report symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19).
3.10	Consider revised access/opening times for learning resources centres and open study areas with appropriate modifications in place to provide for adequate social distancing.	Consideration should be given to multiple use of IT hardware (for example, keyboards) and appropriate cleaning requirements. Changing facilities.
3.11	Review planned capital/maintenance work to ensure essential works only take place and that safe working practices are being implemented by contractors.	Liaise with your ESFA contact where you are reviewing government-funded planned capital work.
3.12	No unannounced external visitors to the college at this time, with planned visits from external visitors limited to those deemed essential by senior leaders.	
4.0 **Staff**	Agree any flexible working arrangements needed by staff to support any changes in delivery patterns	Home working policy; implications for case loading
4.1	Identify staff who can't return to college (shielding/self-isolating/clinically vulnerable) and their alternative contribution	Strategies for recording supporting evidence. Consider options for cover for absent staff to minimise the risk of unstaffed classes and/or learners with unplanned free periods.
4.2	Communicate plans and expectations to staff and arrange for training, pre-briefing and support as appropriate.	
4.3	Put in place measures to check on staff's well being, including for leaders.	Specific HR policies may be needed/amended
4.4	Consider revised travel and transport arrangements and advice for staff to ensure that the use of public transport to travel to and from education settings is minimised as far as possible. Providers must not bring learners back in a manner which would see them using public transport at peak times. Providers should introduce staggered start and end times as appropriate to achieve this.	Due consideration of the wider implication in the community of where this will place demand on public transport/ parking/ and any required revisions to college transport arrangements.
4.5	Confirm policy/approach to testing of staff for coronavirus (COVID-19)	
4.6	Reconfiguration of staff offices where appropriate to conform with social distancing guidance	
4.7	Impact assessment on staff with protected characteristics	

This guide does not supersede any legal obligations relating to health and safety, employment or equalities. It is important that, as an employer, further education providers continue to comply with their existing obligations, including those relating to individuals with relevant protected characteristics. This guide should be taken into account when complying with those existing obligations. When considering how to apply this guidance, take into account agency workers, contractors as well as your employees.

In developing their offer, further education providers should work closely with parents, staff and unions, as they normally would when agreeing the best approaches for their circumstances, and with their local authorities to determine what services they require and to agree on any specific arrangements for this period.

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