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Department for Education

Guidance

Further education (FE) autumn term guidance

Updated 10 September 2020

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The guidance sets out what further education (FE) providers need to know for the autumn term so that students of all ages can benefit from their education and training in full.

Main changes to previous guidance

This guidance document combines the previous operational and autumn term guidance for the FE sector.

We have also made changes to the guidance on:

- implementing risk assessments
- good ventilation to reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- face coverings in FE settings
- managing confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- managing local outbreaks
- public transport
- music, performing arts and physical activity
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Introduction

This guidance explains the actions that further education (FE) and skills providers in England should take for the return of students.

From this autumn, FE providers should:

- resume delivery so that students of all ages can benefit from their education and training in full
- follow the system of controls, which sets out what to do to minimise the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) in your setting
- work with local authorities to contain local outbreaks

This guidance is for leaders and staff in:

- sixth form colleges
- general FE colleges
- independent training providers
- designated institutions
- adult community learning providers
- special post-16 institutions

It also covers expectations for students with education, health and care (EHC) plans in mainstream FE settings, including special post-16 institutions. Specialist post-16 institutions should also read the guidance for full opening for special schools and other specialist settings. Apprenticeship providers should also read the guidance on providing apprenticeships during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

We will keep this guidance under review and update, as necessary.

Minimising coronavirus (COVID-19) risks

Risk assessment

As employers, you must protect people from harm. Health and safety legislation requires employers to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures. This includes taking reasonable steps to protect staff, students and others from coronavirus (COVID-19) within the education setting.

You may already have implemented proportionate control measures to limit the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) for a limited number of students. As part of planning for welcoming students back for the autumn term, you should:

- revisit and update risk assessments
- consider additional risks and control measures to enable a return of all students from the beginning of the autumn term, including those who may be at more risk of an adverse outcome if infected
- review and update wider risk assessments and consider whether you need to put in place additional controls to meet Health and Safety Executive (HSE) requirements for things like ventilation as set out in the estates section - you should implement proportionate control measures which follow the health and safety system of controls to mitigate these risks
- have arrangements in place to monitor control measures to ensure they are working as planned - arrangements should be updated appropriately according to any issues you identify or changes in public health advice
- involve students in the development of a student charter or agreement which sets out responsibilities for staying safe and protecting others

You must record details of:

- risk assessments
- the measures taken to reduce these risks
- expected outcomes

Review your assessment if:

- it is no longer valid
- there has been a significant change

Having assessed your risk, you must work through the system of controls. Make sure the measures you put in place:

- address the risks identified
- work for your organisation
- allow you to deliver the education and training to all your students
- include support for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Ventilation

Poorly ventilated buildings are particularly conducive to virus spread.

HSE guidance sets out how good ventilation can help reduce the risk of spreading coronavirus (COVID-19). It is important to make sure your buildings have good ventilation, maximising this wherever possible. The HSE guidance sets out:

- how good ventilation can be maintained through improving general ventilation, preferably through fresh air or by using mechanical systems
- ways you can maintain and increase the supply of fresh air, for example, by opening windows and doors (unless fire doors)
- why it's important for you to ensure all spaces with multiple occupants are well ventilated - this should at least meet current guidance on the ventilation rate for the setting as set out in Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) guidance
- that where possible, poorly ventilated spaces should be adapted to improve ventilation or not be used as a teaching location
- that you should identify spaces where there is no provision of ventilation and restrict these spaces to single occupancy or very short durations

Estates

FE and skills providers should look to maximise the use of their site and any associated available space, if feasible. We do not, however, consider it necessary for FE providers to make significant adaptations to their site to enable them to welcome all students back.

Following a risk assessment, some FE providers may determine that small adaptations to their site are required, such as additional wash basins. This will be at the discretion of individual FE providers, based on their circumstances.

It is important that, prior to reopening for the autumn term, all the usual pre-term building checks are undertaken to make buildings and the site safe. If buildings have been closed or had reduced occupancy during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, water system stagnation can occur due to lack of use, increasing the risks of Legionnaires' disease. Advice on this can be found in the guidance on Legionella risks during the coronavirus outbreak.

Additional advice on safely reoccupying buildings can be found in the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers' guidance on emerging from lockdown.

Measures within rooms and workshops

Maintaining a distance between people whilst inside and reducing the amount of time they are in face to face contact lowers the risk of transmission. It is strong public health advice that staff maintain distance from their students, staying at the front of the room, and away from their colleagues where possible. Ideally, everyone should maintain a 2 metre distance from each other wherever possible, or 1 metre with additional mitigations.

Everyone should avoid close, direct face to face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of anyone. However, it will not be possible when working with many students who have complex needs or who need close contact care. These students' educational and care support should be provided as normal.

Students should also be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff and their peers where possible. This will not be possible for some students with complex needs and it is not feasible in some sites where space does not allow. Doing this where you can, and even doing this some of the time, will help.

When staff or students cannot maintain distancing, the risk can also be reduced by keeping students in the smaller, 'class-sized' groups.

Make small adaptations to rooms or workshops to support distancing where possible. That should include seating students side by side and facing forwards, rather than face to face or side on and might include moving unnecessary furniture out of rooms to make more space. More information for particular types of vocational areas can be found in the working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance.

Measures elsewhere

Groups should be kept apart. Avoid large gatherings such as meetings with more than one group.

When timetabling, groups should be kept apart and movement around the site kept to a minimum. While passing briefly in the corridor or outdoor communal areas is low risk, you should avoid creating busy corridors, entrances and exits. You should also consider staggered break times and lunch times (and time for cleaning surfaces in the canteen or restaurant between groups).

You should also plan how shared staff spaces are set up and used to help staff to distance from each other. Use of staff rooms should be minimised although staff must still have a break of a reasonable length during the day.

If your institution operates commercial training environments such as hairdressing, barbering and beauty salons, sports and fitness facilities or restaurants, they must comply with relevant sector guidance in working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19).

Where institutions have kitchens on site, these are able to operate as normal, but they must comply with the guidance for food businesses on coronavirus (COVID-19).

Music

There may be an additional risk of infection in environments where you or others are:

- singing
- chanting
- playing wind or brass instruments
- shouting

This applies even if individuals are at a distance.

Singing, wind and brass instrument playing can be undertaken in line with the guidance provided by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) on working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) in the performing arts.

Studies have indicated that it is the cumulative aerosol transmission from both those performing in and attending events that is likely to create risk. DCMS is continuing to develop a more detailed understanding of how to mitigate this potential aggregate risk. Colleges that offer specialist, elite provision in music, dance and drama should also follow the latest DCMS guidance on the performing arts.

Music teaching in colleges including singing and playing wind and brass instruments in groups

Although singing and playing wind and brass instruments do not currently appear to represent a significantly higher risk than routine speaking and breathing at the same volume, there is now some evidence that additional risk can build from aerosol transmission with volume and with the combined numbers of individuals within a confined space. This is particularly evident for singing and shouting, but with appropriate safety mitigation and consideration, singing, wind and brass teaching can still take place.

Measures to take include:

- playing instruments and singing in groups should take place outdoors wherever possible - if indoors, consider limiting the numbers in relation to space
- if indoors, use a room with as much space as possible, for example, larger rooms, rooms with high ceilings are expected to enable dilution of aerosol transmission
- if playing indoors, limiting the numbers to account for ventilation of the space and the ability to social distance. It is important to ensure good ventilation - advice on this can be found in Health and Safety Executive guidance on air conditioning and ventilation during the coronavirus outbreak
- singing, wind and brass playing should not take place in larger groups such as choirs and ensembles, or assemblies unless significant space, natural airflow (at least 10l/s/person for all present, including audiences) and strict social distancing and mitigation as described below can be maintained
- in the smaller groups where these activities can take place, colleges should observe strict social distancing between each singer/player, and between singers/players and any other people such as conductors, other musicians, or accompanists - current guidance is that if the activity is face-to-face and without mitigating actions, 2 metres is appropriate
- students should be positioned back-to-back or side-to-side when playing or singing (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible
- position wind and brass players so that the air from their instrument does not blow into another player
- use microphones where possible or encourage singing quietly

By considering and adopting these additional risk mitigation measures, the overall risk will be reduced.

Performing arts

This section of the guidance is designed to help you minimise risk for performing arts provision during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. You should also take account of the guidance on working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) in the performing arts, which is applicable to both professionals and non-professionals.

Performing arts courses, in normal circumstances, may involve a considerable amount of practical face-to-face teaching and assessment. Some providers have found alternative methods during the outbreak. You should consider new ways of delivering in-person teaching and assessment that adhere to guidelines on social distancing, so that all students can receive a high-quality academic experience in a way that protects both students and staff.

If it is not possible to avoid face-to-face teaching or group sessions, particular effort should be made to maintain social distancing and consideration given to other additional approaches to mitigate the potential for transmission.

Teaching sessions

You should design sessions and rehearsals to avoid situations where students are unable to socially distance. If this is not possible, reduce any time that students are not able to maintain social distancing.

Consider the number of students in teaching groups. Smaller teaching group sizes should be used where it is not possible to maintain social distancing. For example, you might consider reducing the:

- sizes of casts in drama
- size of orchestras
- number of students involved in movement sessions

Where this is not possible, you should take mitigating actions to reduce the risk of transmission between staff and students, such as holding the session in a larger room.

Where social distancing cannot be adhered to, consider the use of technology solutions to reduce interactions, for example for one to one tutorials, rehearsals and practice and if possible, for assignments. You might consider using booths, barriers or screens between individuals who are not part of a teaching group, between teaching groups and others, and between performers and any staff or students not participating at that moment.

Ensure no one is participating in in-person sessions if they are suffering with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or when advised to self-isolate.

Equipment

Equipment, including instruments and props are integral to many performing arts courses. Measures should be taken when handling equipment. These include:

- avoiding sharing equipment if possible
- if equipment has to be shared, making sure there is increased handwashing before and after handling equipment
- regularly cleaning all equipment including shared instruments, desks, sound and lighting equipment, mics or battery packs
- limiting the handling of paperwork, including music scores, scripts and learning materials

Audiences

Refer to guidance on working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) in the performing arts for advice around audiences.

You should consider whether there is a need for a live audience. Where it is essential to have an audience, for assessment and teaching purposes, they should be seated in accordance with social distancing. Staff and other students can watch rehearsals and performances, but they should avoid cheering or shouting. This is because of the potential for increased risk of transmission – particularly from aerosol and droplet transmission. You might consider mitigating actions, such as the use of screens to protect audience members where necessary and limiting the length of performances. Maximum ventilation should be applied in all enclosed performance areas and both the ventilation and social distancing measures should consider performers and audience cumulatively.

Students should be prepared for the difficulties of performing without an audience or with a reduced audience, especially if the production is particularly interactive.

Physical activity in FE

You have the flexibility to decide how physical education, sport and physical activity will be provided whilst following the measures in the system of controls. Students should be kept in consistent groups and sports equipment thoroughly cleaned between each use by different individual groups.

Sports whose national governing bodies have developed guidance under the principles of the government's guidance on team sport and been approved by the government are permitted. Colleges must only provide team sports on this list and ensure they follow the national governing body guidance.

Outdoor sports should be prioritised where possible, and large indoor spaces used where it is not, maximising distancing between students and paying scrupulous attention to cleaning and hygiene and using maximum fresh air ventilation through either opening doors and windows or ventilation systems. This is particularly important in a sports setting because of the way in which people breathe during exercise. External facilities can also be used in line with government guidance for the use of, and travel to and from, those facilities.

You should refer to advice:

- on the phased return of sport and recreation and guidance from Sport England for grassroot sport
- from organisations such as the Association for Physical Education and the Youth Sport Trust
- from Swim England on school swimming and water safety lessons

You are able to work with external coaches, clubs and organisations for curricular and extra-curricular activities where you are satisfied that it is safe to do so. You should consider carefully how such arrangements can operate within the wider protective measures.

Students who are shielding or self-isolating

We now know much more about coronavirus (COVID-19) and so in future, there will be far fewer children and young people advised to shield whenever community transmission rates are high. We expect most students will be able to return full time (part time for students attending part time courses) in the autumn term.

A small number of students may still be unable to attend because they are:

- self-isolating or living with someone who is and/or has had symptoms or a positive test result themselves
- a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)

Shielding advice for all adults and young people was paused on 1 August. This means that even the small number of students who will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to college, as can those who have family members who were shielding. Read the current advice on shielding.

If rates of the disease rise in local areas, young people (or family members) from that area, and that area only, may be advised to shield during the period where rates remain high and therefore they may be temporarily unable to attend.

Students no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional are likely to discuss their care with their health professional at their next planned clinical appointment.

You can find more advice from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health at COVID-19 - 'shielding' guidance for children and young people.

If students are not able to attend because of public health advice, we expect you to offer them access to remote education.

Students who are pregnant should follow the relevant guidance in coronavirus infection and pregnancy.

Local outbreaks

The COVID-19 contain framework sets out how national and local partners will work together to prevent, contain and manage local outbreaks. If a local area sees a spike in infection rates that result in localised community spread, relevant authorities will decide which measures to implement to help contain the spread.

All decisions relating to education provision in a geographical area will be made at a national level by the Secretary of State for Education. The Department for Education (DfE) and Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) will support appropriate authorities and individual settings to follow the health advice. In the event of local restrictions being implemented which affect education, guidance will be published outlining the steps that colleges may need to take.

Read the government's approach to managing local coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreaks.

You should develop a strong contingency plan for remote education provision by the end of September. This will help ensure you are able to rapidly shift to blended, or if necessary remote education should the need arise, accepting that some provision cannot be delivered remotely (for example, occupational competence provision).

This planning will be important to make sure education and training is maintained in a range of scenarios, from a single student needing to stay at home, to circumstances where large numbers of students are required to remain at home due to a local lockdown.

Transport

Social distancing has significantly reduced available public transport capacity. This section sets out how you can support students getting to and from FE and skills providers.

The guidance on transport for schools and other places of education provides information about the steps local authorities are taking to ensure that children and young people can travel to school and college in the autumn. It also includes information on the measures you should take where you provide dedicated transport for students.

You are advised to work with your local transport authority to identify when it might be necessary to take steps to manage demand on public transport or to arrange additional transport. Local transport authorities have received additional funding for school and college dedicated transport to support children and young people in their region to return to school and FE providers. Funding has been allocated to reflect the number of children and young people in the area and how far they travel. Local authorities (through their local transport authorities) have been asked to work with local education providers to help plan and manage transport locally to help ensure young people can return to their education in the autumn.

Dedicated FE and skills provider transport

Students on dedicated transport services do not mix with the general public on those journeys and student groups will tend to be consistent under return to college measures. Therefore, wider transmission risks are likely to be lower.

From the autumn term, local authorities will not be required to uniformly apply the social distancing guidelines for public transport on dedicated school or college transport. However, social distancing should still be put in place within vehicles wherever possible. This will help both to minimise disease transmission risks and maintain consistent reinforcement of public health messaging to students and staff, particularly at the point where they are leaving college and heading back into the community each day.

Dedicated provider transport services can take different forms and may include:

- coaches regularly picking up the same students each day
- minibuses
- services that are used by different students on different days
- services for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

The precise approach that you take will need to reflect the range of measures that are reasonable in the different circumstances.

Speak to your transport provider to confirm the approach they are adopting. Check it follows the system of controls. It is important, wherever possible, that:

- social distancing should be maximised within vehicles
- students are grouped together on transport
- organised queuing and boarding is put in place
- students should clean their hands before boarding transport and again on disembarking
- the use of face coverings is promoted, where appropriate
- additional cleaning of vehicles is put in place
- ventilation of fresh air (from outside the vehicle) is maximised, particularly through opening windows and ceiling vents

- through opening windows and ceiling vents

In accordance with advice from Public Health England (PHE), we recommend that children and young people aged 11 and over wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated school and college transport from the start of the autumn term. This does not apply to those who are exempt from wearing a face covering on public transport. A face covering is a covering of any type which covers your nose and mouth.

Wider public transport

In many areas, students make extensive use of the wider public transport system, particularly public buses, to travel to education. Public transport capacity will continue to be constrained in the autumn term. Its use, particularly in peak times, should be kept to an absolute minimum.

Where possible, consider staggered start times to enable more journeys to take place outside of peak hours.

Encourage staff and students to walk or cycle where possible.

Refer students and staff using public transport to the safer travel guidance for passengers. Remind them that it is the law that they wear a face covering when travelling in England on a public bus, coach, train, tram, or other forms of public transport, unless they are exempt. See guidance on face coverings for more information.

Where you have concerns regarding students' ability to access public transport routes, speak to your local authority to consider what alternative safe transport arrangements could be put in place.

Work with your local authority to consider the transport needs of students with SEND and those with an EHC plan.

Moving between settings

Consider whether you need any additional processes in place for students who regularly:

- attend more than one site or different providers
- move between a training provider and workplace as part of an apprenticeship

As apprenticeship delivery can be extremely flexible, it is up to you, the employer and the end point assessment organisation to agree on how apprenticeship training is delivered, and how assessments are undertaken. You should consider whether you want to take advantage of more than one delivery method to balance minimising any risks from coronavirus (COVID-19) with providing a full educational experience. For example, a block release delivery method may be better at reducing movement between sites.

See guidance on providing apprenticeships during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Temporary staff and visitors

Consider how to minimise the number of visitors to your setting where possible. Supply staff and visitors such as sports coaches must follow your arrangements for managing and minimising risk.

To help you minimise the numbers of temporary staff entering your premises, consider:

- using longer assignments with supply staff
- agreeing to a minimum number of hours across the academic year

Educational visits

We continue to advise against domestic (UK) overnight and overseas educational visits. This advice remains under review.

In the autumn term, you can resume non-overnight domestic educational visits. These trips should include any trips for students with SEND connected with their preparation for adulthood (for example, workplace visits, travel training). This should be done in line with protective measures. As normal, you should undertake full and thorough risk assessments in relation to all educational visits to ensure they can be done safely. As part of this risk assessment, you will need to consider what control measures need to be used and ensure you are aware of wider advice on visiting indoor and outdoor venues. You should consult the health and safety guidance on educational visits when considering visits.

The Association of British Insurers (ABI) has produced information on travel insurance implications following the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. If you have any further questions about your cover or would like further reassurance, contact your travel insurance provider.

System of controls

This is the set of actions you must take. They are grouped into prevention and response to any infection.

Prevention

1) Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend the setting.

2) Where recommended, use of face coverings in FE settings.

3) Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual.

4) Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.

5) Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents.

6) Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible.

7) Where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Numbers 1 to 5 must be in place in all settings, all the time.

Number 6 must be properly considered and settings must put in place measures to maintain social distancing where possible.

Number 7 applies in specific circumstances.

Response to any infection

8) Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.

9) Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the education setting community.

10) Contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice.

Numbers 8 to 10 must be followed in every case where they are relevant.

Prevention

You must put these actions in place to help prevent the risk of infection.

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, or who have been advised by NHS Test and Trace to stay at home, do not attend the setting. Individuals formally advised by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact should also self-isolate.

Ensuring that students, staff and other adults do not come into your site if they have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or have tested positive in the last 10 days is essential to reduce the risk in education settings and further drive down transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). Make sure anyone developing those symptoms while on site is sent home. Individuals formally advised by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact should also self-isolate.

All settings must follow this process and ensure all staff are aware of it.

If anyone on your site becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must be sent home and advised to follow guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection. This sets out that they should self-isolate for at least 10 days and should arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19).

If they have tested positive whilst not experiencing symptoms but develop symptoms during the isolation period, they should restart the 10 day isolation period from the day they develop symptoms.

Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.

If a student is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age and needs of the person. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.

If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom must be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.

PPE must be worn by staff caring for the individual while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a young person with complex needs). More information on PPE use can be found in the safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) guidance.

For more information on how to care for a symptomatic student while protecting the welfare of other students and staff, read the guidance on isolation for residential educational settings.

As is usual practice, in an emergency, call 999 if someone is seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Anyone with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms should not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital except in an emergency situation.

Any members of staff who have helped someone with symptoms and any students who have been in close contact with them do not need to go home to self-isolate unless:

- they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange a test etc.)
- the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive or
- they have been requested to do so by NHS Test and Trace

Everyone must wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and running water or use hand sanitiser after any contact with someone who is unwell. The area around the person with symptoms must be cleaned after they have left to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people. See the COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance.

Public Health England is clear that routinely taking the temperature of students is not recommended as this is an unreliable method for identifying coronavirus (COVID-19).

2. Where recommended, use of face coverings in FE settings.

From 1 September, new advice will apply to the use of face coverings by staff and students in further education settings.

Returning to education is vital for a student's education and for wellbeing. Time out of education is detrimental for their cognitive and academic development, particularly for disadvantaged learners, therefore we need to ensure all students can return to education sooner rather than later.

This guidance is not mandatory and any legal exemptions that apply to the wearing of face coverings in shops and on public transport also apply to this new advice.

There is additional guidance available about wearing face coverings in public spaces where social distancing is not always possible.

General approach to face coverings

The government is not recommending face coverings are necessary for education settings generally because a system of controls, which are applicable to all education environments, provides additional mitigating measures.

Further education providers will have the discretion to require the use of face coverings in communal areas where social distancing cannot be safely managed if they believe that it is right in their particular circumstances.

You might decide to recommend the wearing of face coverings for students and staff in specific communal settings where the layout of the setting makes it difficult to maintain social distancing when staff and students are moving around the premises (for example, in corridors).

Consider permitting the use of face coverings where, on top of the hygiene measures and the system of controls, it would provide additional confidence to students to support a full return to education in the autumn term.

Based on current evidence and the mitigating measures that FE providers are putting in place, face coverings will not generally be necessary in the traditional classroom setting, even where social distancing is not possible. There is greater use of the system of controls for minimising risk, including keeping in small and consistent groups, and greater scope for physical distancing by staff within classrooms. Face coverings would have a negative impact on learning and teaching and so their use in the classroom should be avoided.

Outside of the traditional classroom setting, consider recommending the use of face coverings where:

- teaching settings are more reflective of, or are a workplace environment, for example, a restaurant that may be open to the public
- it is a requirement of the workplace or other indoor setting and where the teaching is taking place in an area in which students or staff are likely to come into contact with other members of the public (complying with relevant coronavirus (COVID-19) sector guidance)

Where local restrictions apply

You should take additional precautionary measures in local restriction areas, where the transmission of the virus is high. In FE settings in these areas, face coverings should be worn by adults and students when moving around, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain. It will not usually be necessary to wear face coverings in the classroom, where protective measures already mean the risks are lower, and they may inhibit teaching and learning.

In the event of new local restrictions being imposed, you will need to communicate quickly and clearly to staff, students, parents and carers that the new arrangements require the use of face coverings in certain circumstances.

Exemptions

Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings. For example, people who:

- cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- are speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate

The same exemptions will apply in education settings, and we would expect teachers and other staff to be sensitive to those needs.

Access to face coverings

It is reasonable to assume that staff and students will now have access to face coverings due to their increasing use in wider society. Public Health England has published guidance on how to make a simple face covering.

However, you should have a small contingency supply available for people who:

- are struggling to access a face covering
- are unable to use their face covering as it's become soiled or unsafe
- have forgotten their face covering

No-one should be excluded from education on the grounds that they are not wearing a face covering.

Safe wearing and removal of face coverings

You should have a process for removing face coverings when those who use face coverings arrive and when face coverings are worn on your premises in certain circumstances. This process should be communicated clearly to students and staff.

Safe wearing of face coverings requires the:

- cleaning of hands before and after touching, including to remove or put them on
- safe storage of them in individual, sealable plastic bags between use

Where a face covering becomes damp, it should not be worn and the face covering should be replaced carefully.

Students must be instructed to:

- not touch the front of their face covering during use or when removing it
- dispose of temporary face coverings in a 'black bag' waste bin or, where appropriate a recycling bin (if safely bagged and left for 72 hours out of reach)
- place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them
- wash their hands again before heading to their classroom

Guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care provides more advice.

3. Clean hands thoroughly, more often than usual.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an easy virus to kill when it is on skin. This can be done with soap and running water or hand sanitiser. You must ensure that students clean their hands regularly, including

- when they arrive at your site
- when they return from breaks
- when they change rooms
- before and after eating

Regular and thorough hand cleaning is going to be needed for the foreseeable future.

Consider:

- whether your site has enough hand washing or hand sanitiser 'stations' available so that all students and staff can clean their hands regularly
- supervision and help with hand sanitiser use given risks around ingestion for students with complex needs - skin-friendly skin cleaning wipes can be used as an alternative
- building these routines into your site culture, supported by behaviour expectations, and helping ensure younger students and those with complex needs understand the need to follow them

4. Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important, so education settings must ensure that they have enough tissues and bins available to support students and staff to follow this routine. As with hand cleaning, you must ensure those with complex needs are helped to get this right, and all students understand that this is now part of how your site operates.

Some students with complex needs will struggle to maintain as good respiratory hygiene as their peers, for example, those who spit uncontrollably or use saliva as a sensory stimulant. This should be considered in risk assessments in order to support these students and the staff working with them and is not a reason to deny these students face to face education.

Further education providers have the discretion to recommend the wearing of face coverings in the communal areas of the education setting. See the face covering section for more information.

5. Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents.

Consider:

- putting in place a cleaning schedule that ensures cleaning is generally enhanced and includes:
  - more frequent cleaning of rooms and shared areas that are used by different groups
  - frequently touched surfaces being cleaned more often than normal
- that toilets will need to be cleaned regularly and students must be encouraged to clean their hands thoroughly after using the toilet - different groups being allocated their own toilet blocks could be considered but is not a requirement if the site does not allow for it

Public Health England has published revised guidance for cleaning non-healthcare settings. This contains advice on the general cleaning required in addition to the existing advice on cleaning those settings when there is a suspected case.

6. Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible.

Minimising contacts and mixing between people reduces transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This is important in all contexts, and you must consider how to implement this. You must do everything possible to minimise contacts and mixing while delivering a full programme of study. Where possible you should maintain 2 metres between people.

The overarching principle to apply is reducing the number of contacts between students and staff. This can be achieved through keeping groups separate (in 'bubbles') and through maintaining the distance between individuals. These are not alternative options and both measures will help, but the balance between them will change depending on the:

- age groups of students
- layout of the building
- feasibility of keeping distinct groups separate while offering a broad programme of learning

How to group students

Consistent groups reduce the risk of transmission by limiting the number of students and staff in contact with each other to only those within the group.

Maintaining distinct groups or 'bubbles' that do not mix makes it quicker and easier in the event of a positive case to identify those who may need to self-isolate, and keep that number as small as possible.

You should explore how you can reduce contacts between individuals and groups, and how to maintain distance where possible. All settings are different, and some measures will be more appropriate for certain age groups, or more easily manageable in certain buildings.

Where 'class-sized' groups are not possible in order to deliver the full programme of study, or to manage the practical logistics within and around the site, other measures from the system of controls become even more important. We strongly recommend that, as a minimum, you plan to keep your year groups or cohorts of students separate from each other during the day. You will need to think about whether you can group students into smaller groupings and still deliver a full programme of study. However, there is no set requirement to make cohorts smaller than a normal class size. By limiting contact between different groups, this means that if one person in a group tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), you can be confident that they have only had close contact with some or all of that group, rather than the whole year group. These are considerations you will need to make when reaching your decision.

Once groups are established, they should be kept apart and logistics such as start and finish times, lunch and break times, should be reviewed to ensure this.

Although passing briefly in the corridor or external areas is low risk, you should avoid creating very busy corridors or entrances and exits. You should also consider staggered break times and lunch times (and time for cleaning surfaces in the canteens/restaurants between groups). Avoiding big gatherings is strongly recommended, such as meetings with more than one group you are otherwise trying to keep apart.

Both the approaches of separating groups and maintaining distance are not 'all or nothing' options and will still bring benefits even if implemented partially. You may keep students in their groups for most of the time, but also allow mixing into wider groups for specialist teaching, wrap around care and transport. Siblings may also be in different groups. Endeavouring to keep these groups at least partially separate and minimising contacts between students will still offer public health benefits as it reduces the network of possible direct transmission.

We recognise that some staff will need to move between groups, for example, teachers delivering maths and English for students studying a broad range of vocational and academic subjects. You should take steps to minimise the movement of staff between groups where possible, but if they need to teach multiple groups, they should adhere to broader protective measures such as maintaining distance from students where possible.

7. Where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

The majority of staff in education settings will not require PPE beyond what they would normally need for their work. PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases, including where a student:

- becomes ill with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms while at an educational setting, and only then if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained
- already has routine intimate care needs that involve the use of PPE, in which case the same PPE should continue to be used

Read the guidance on safe working in education, childcare and children's social care for more information about preventing and controlling infection. This includes when and how PPE should be used, what type of PPE to use, and how to source it.

Face coverings are not classified as PPE (personal protective equipment). PPE is used in a limited number of settings to protect wearers against hazards and risks, such as surgical masks or respirators used in medical and industrial settings. A face covering is a covering of any type which covers your nose and mouth.

Response to any infection

These are the steps you must take to respond to any infection. You must follow each step.

8. Engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.

You must ensure you understand the NHS Test and Trace process and how to contact your local Public Health England health protection team. You must ensure that staff members, students, parents and carers understand that they will need to be ready and willing to:

- book a test if they are displaying symptoms - staff and students must not come onto your site if they have symptoms, and must be sent home to self-isolate if they develop them on your premises
- provide details of anyone they have been in close contact with if they were to test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or if asked by NHS Test and Trace
- self-isolate if they have been in close contact with someone who develops coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or someone who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)

Anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a test. Tests can be booked online through the NHS website, or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the internet. Essential workers, which includes anyone involved in education or childcare, have priority access to testing.

The government will ensure that it is as easy as possible to get a test through a wide range of routes that are locally accessible, fast and convenient. We will release more details on new testing avenues as and when they become available and will work with you, so you understand the quickest and easiest way to get a test.

FE providers will have access to a small number of home testing kits that they can give directly to students or a parent or carer of a student who has developed symptoms on site, or staff who have developed symptoms on site, where they think providing one will significantly increase the likelihood of them getting tested. Advice will be provided alongside these kits.

You should ask students and staff to inform you immediately of the results of a test.

If someone tests negative, if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating. They could still have another virus, such as a cold or flu, in which case it is still best to avoid contact with other people until they are better. Other members of their household can stop self-isolating.

If someone tests positive, they should follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection and must continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return onsite only if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss or change in sense of smell/taste. This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 10 day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.

9. Manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the education setting community.

You must take swift action when you become aware that someone who has attended has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). You should contact the local health protection team. This team will also contact you directly if they become aware that someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) attended your premises, as identified by NHS Test and Trace.

The health protection team will carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious, and ensure they are asked to self-isolate.

The health protection team will work with you in this situation to guide you through the actions you need to take. Based on the advice from the health protection team, you must send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious. Close contact means:

- direct close contacts - face to face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin to skin)

- proactively contacts - extended cross-council (within 1 to 2 weeks) for more information and support if needed
- transition is a vulnerable time, so we will be extra vigilant

The local health protocols have been and will provide definitive advice to you on what to do and how to support your child or pupil, or family, who are exposed to a new or recurrent case of coronavirus (COVID-19) and who groups and include a check to optimise the support to children and families who are in the process of being tested, or are in proportionate monitoring phase. Our role is to provide information and support to ensure everyone they have spoken time with each day as our staff to ensure behaviour is consistent, and to ensure consistency.

A template letter will be prepared by us, for the advice of the health protocolse and to be sent to parents/carers of children who are in proportionate monitoring phase. Where a school is unable to provide this letter, we will provide it on behalf of the school.

Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate unless the contact is a household member who is asked to self-isolate by subsequently developing symptoms. If someone in a group that has been asked to self-isolate develops symptoms, they should immediately self-isolate and request a test. Household members should then self-isolate for 14 days (see updated coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance. They should get a test, and

- if the test is positive or negative, they should stay at home and self-isolate for the remainder of the 14 day isolation period - this is because they could still develop symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) at any point
- if the test is negative, they should continue to self-isolate for the 14 day period, and must isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms (which means they can end self-isolation after 10 days if they have been ill for 10 days and have had no fever for 48 hours, but must self-isolate for a total of 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms, following guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

You should not need to contact us for advice on this, unless a other medical evidence before admitting students or advising them back after a period of self-isolation.

Further guidance is available on testing and tracing for coronavirus (COVID-19).

6) Contact any cases to the Education and Training Advisory Service team. If you have 2 or more confirmed cases within 10 days, or an overall rise in absence, please contact the Education and Training Advisory Service, you may need to:

- continue to work with your local health protection team who will be able to advise you if additional action is required
- inform ELPS of the health protection team advice either direct or via the DfE helpline (see below)

In some cases, health protection teams may recommend that a larger number of students/staff should self-isolate. This will be based on the risk of further cases, which other or a specific group. We will provide support to schools and colleges in addressing the risks you have identified and therefore reducing transmission. We will also provide support to schools and colleges in the rare case that this may be necessary, and should not be considered except on the advice of health protection teams.

Education and training delivery

What we expect of FE providers

From this autumn, we expect you to resume delivery so that students of all ages can benefit from education and training. We expect that FE providers will:

- fully deliver planned hours for students aged 16 to 19 (and for some mid-term start dates in autumn 2020), including those with SEND (with or without an EHCP plan)
- ensure that students receive the education and training they require supplemented to high quality remote delivery where that is effective working for individual students
- assess the gaps in education and training that students have as a result of the pandemic and focus on addressing the significant gaps to help them to catch up
- ensure that students receive their full entitlement to English and mathematics provision, including functional skills and GCSE programmes, supplemented by remote delivery
- identify and put in place plans to manage any safeguarding concerns

Mode of delivery

Some providers delivered aspects of provision remotely prior to national lockdown and this has been successfully and effectively supported students. We may continue in the new academic year:

- to increase the use of remote delivery to reasonable provided that:
- it complements the overall offer and does not undermine the quality of provision and students' overall experience
- it is delivered consistently for the majority of planned learning hours for all 16 to 19 students, including those with SEND (with or without an EHCP plan), including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and those with EHCP plans
- approaches used for building knowledge and skills are appropriate to meet the reasonable needs of students

Adult students have always been offered a wide variety of delivery modes in accordance with their needs. We will, as we do for all other FE providers, support COVID-19 outbreaks, and ensure that FE providers judge the right balance between on-site and remote delivery for adult students in order to provide high quality education.

The Taskforce will remain providers additional guidance on the different ways that providers can deliver, including, for example, blended learning, 'flipped' learning, and, virtual.

- support staff and students to access and make effective use of digital technology, including providing access to devices and connectivity and digital resources and skills
- take account of the skills and confidence of your teachers in using digital technology and provide appropriate training and support to develop their digital competence and confidence in using digital technology
- provide students with clear expectations on remote education, so they know what and how they are expected to engage and participate in remote learning
- ensure that students who are shielding or who are vulnerable due to other reasons take consideration given to how to support disadvantaged students and children and young people with SEND
- take account of home learning environments and the support that students may need to work effectively from home, including:
- the sensitive and adaptive to the wellbeing and welfare of both students and teachers

Support for young people who are unable to access remote digital education

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students access education and training. Students can use the Bursary Fund to pay for remote education. They may include the provision of devices and connectivity support. Students aged 16 to 19 in 16 to 19 study programmes, or who are 19 or over and students aged up to 25 with an EHCP plan or a learning difficulty assessment, can apply for a 16 to 19 Bursary Fund bursary.

We are introducing a change to the adult education budget (ADB) funding rules for the 2020 to 2021 academic year. This is to provide more flexibility in the support funds to purchase IT devices for students (digital SFF) and to help them access education and training. This will be subject to our ability to provide accessing or continuing to learn.

The introduction of this additional flexibility into the funding rules will be continued into academic year 2021 to 2022 subject to ministerial clearance.

See the ADB funding rules 2020 to 2021 for further details.

This flexibility is only for providers funded through the ADB. In areas where the ADB budget is devolved, contact the relevant mayoral authority concerning adult education support and funding.

Support for high quality remote and blended education

Sufficient demonstration programme

We will be supporting a wide range of providers to develop their capabilities in remote and blended learning.

The Blended Learning Consortium has FE-specific resources across a range of subjects and levels. Their focus is on remote learning.

Workskills UK is developing a set of digital resources. This includes:

- Access using a tablet, which provides resources to support students think about their future
- Learn Teach, which and podcasts, which provide short video masterclasses and podcasts

The College Collaboration Fund is funding several sector projects to develop high quality digital curriculum and teaching resources. This content will become available from the autumn.

Digital curriculum content and resources

Providers can use the following recommended qualifications and national standards for A curriculum subject areas:

- construction
- digital and IT
- education and childcare
- health and social care
- hairdressing

Digital skills for students

- Digital skills for students aged 16 to 19 (guides for FE relating to vocational and academic cohorts) and Digital skills for students aged 19 and above
- Digital skills for students aged 19 and above, which provides short video masterclasses and podcasts

Digital skills for teachers

- Teaching online
- Using safe online
- Digital skills for teachers guide for FE staff (in Effective and essential digital skills training to support remote working. The guide identifies and provides signposting to a range of digital skills training and resources that will support digital teaching delivery as well as other useful resources which can contribute to developing the knowledge, skills and understanding required for teaching online and digitally.

The Taskforce also plans to develop further resources to develop skills for effective remote learning. These include:

- Teaching online
- Blended learning examples
- Use of technology in blended learning

Through Gateway and Ways ahead provide free training to help teachers use their platforms to build remote learning and blended resources. This content will become available from the autumn.

Digital curriculum content and resources

Providers can use the following recommended qualifications and national standards for A curriculum subject areas:

- construction
- digital and IT
- education and childcare
- health and social care
- hairdressing

Workskills UK is developing a set of digital resources. This includes:

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Providers can use these resources and recommended qualifications and national standards for A curriculum subject areas:

- construction
- digital and IT
- education and childcare
- health and social care
- hairdressing

Employers have a duty to contract their employees on health and safety in good time. It also makes good sense to involve students in discussions around health and safety, and to make sure they understand the measures that are in place to keep them safe.

Following the guidance of partners will mitigate the risks of coronavirus (COVID-19) to students and staff.

Workforce

We expect that most staff will be able to attend work.

All staffworking on site should follow the system of controls to minimise the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) and follow the guidance for Education and childcare settings to support their health and safety.

Explain to staff the measures you are putting in place to reduce risks.

Discuss any concerns individuals may have about coronavirus (COVID-19) with them. We encourage providers to be flexible and try to accommodate additional measures if appropriate.

Staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable

Rates of community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) are now reduced to levels where fewer staff should be clinically extremely vulnerable. Shielding measures were paused from 31 August, except for areas where local lockdown measures that continue to apply. Staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable should not be extremely vulnerable to coronavirus (COVID-19) and should follow the guidance for workers in premises, their workplace has implemented to minimise the risk of coronavirus.

Staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable should follow the same guidance as for clinically vulnerable population, taking particular care to practice frequent hand washing and to follow the guidance of frequently touched areas in the workplace and minimise contact.

People who live with those who are clinically extremely vulnerable can attend the workplace.

Staff who are clinically vulnerable

Clinically vulnerable staff can return to work. Where in the workplace, they should follow the system of controls to minimise the risks of transmission.

People who live with those who are clinically vulnerable can attend the workplace.

Clinically vulnerable staff have concerns around their individual circumstances, should discuss these concerns and the flexibility in working address them.

Staff who are pregnant

Pregnant workers are in the 'clinically vulnerable' category, and are generally advised to follow the guidance for clinically vulnerable people. Pregnant women should contact a risk assessment by pregnant women and other at risk the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

Pregnant women are not considered to be at increased risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) and have no additional concerns about their individual circumstances, the flexibility in working and other measures in place to address these concerns.

Employers have a duty to contract their employees on health and safety in good time. It also makes good sense to involve students in discussions around health and safety, and to make sure they understand the measures that are in place to keep them safe.

Following the guidance of partners will mitigate the risks of coronavirus (COVID-19) to students and staff.

Emergency treatment and first aid

Emergency treatment, for example, provision of first aid, should be prioritised, and given promptly to the extent of an emergency. This means that people do not need to be in close contact with people who are coronavirus (COVID-19).

People related to the provision of emergency treatment should pay particular attention to hygiene measures immediately afterwards, including washing hands.

Recruitment

You can continue recruiting members of staff.

You can refer people for the Talent Teachers Further programme. This programme is for people who are considering a career change into teaching, roles in the FE sector.

If you are recruiting English, maths or SENDtutors, you can apply for a service critical keyworker exemption (CV) card, or PCR card.

Teacher training

You should continue to hold teacher education (ITE), including teacher training placements, where possible.

Supporting staff

Encourage your teachers and staff to look after their employees, and this extends to their mental health.

Remote working can be particularly anxious about returning, you may need extra systems in place to support staff wellbeing. Read about the extra mental health support for people working from home.

Supporting vulnerable young people

Vulnerable young people are those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including those who are being cared for by their parents, and those who are children in care and care leavers (child
- have an EHC plan and following a risk assessment it is decided that their education or training plan
- have been assessed as being at risk of education, training or employment gaps local authorities (including children's social care services) - this includes children who are being cared for by their parents and those who are children in care and care leavers
- adopted children
- those who are 'persistently not in employment, education or training (NEET)'
- those living in temporary accommodation
- young parents
- others at the provider and local authority's discretion

Attendance

All students, including vulnerable young people, should attend FE settings in accordance with their timetable.

You should remind students that they should not attend if they:

- are ill
- are self-isolating, including if self-isolating due to household member having a suspected or confirmed case
- are a close contact of someone who has been found to test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)

It is important to keep an accurate record of attendance should there be a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the students who may be the local health protection team advise you on who must be sent home.

If vulnerable young people are not able to attend, for example, because, cases and social workers to receive early triage in tandem. You should also consider the impact of the local lockdown measures and the impact of the local lockdown measures in your area.

If vulnerable young people cannot attend education settings, for example, because they are self-isolating, we expect providers to maintain contact with them to ensure they feel safe and are receiving the education they need to progress. We should also maintain contact with personal advisers and school nurses have been relaxed and the requirement for home visits has been lifted.

In case of any localised outbreaks, you should continue to prioritise vulnerable young people for in-person.

Transition to FE

Transition is particularly important this September because every post-16 students will need to be able to undertake transitions such as visits to visits, to FE settings.

We expect FE providers and schools and local authorities to support transitions. This includes sharing information and individual transition plans for students. Local children's safe in education sets out responsibilities for sharing information.

Some young people will need more support than others to make a successful support. Use external support where necessary and possible. See the transition support guidance for more information.

You should assess where students are in their learning and agree an action plan to support their transition to FE. Use the Ofsted 'Inspection of SEND' to identify the individual support they need to make a successful transition. In exceptional circumstances (for example, those under active specialist care or advised by medical professionals).

SEND temporary legislative changes

From 5 May to 31 July, section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014 was modified. Local authorities and health commissioners were required to use their 'reasonable endeavours' to secure or arrange the specified special educational provision and health care provision in an EHC plan. Providers should provide where the required provision is not being delivered, or where they are not but issuing further notices to modify duty. Our focus is now on supporting providers to deliver the provision in EHC plans and providing support and settings to reduce the disruption for all young people with EHC plans.

The temporary changes to the law on the timescales for EHC needs assessments and for the preparation of EHC plans, and the duty to keep plans under the relevant provisions, ceased to have effect on 31 July. Local authorities should on their by coronavirus (COVID-19), and/or as planned on 25 September 2020.

We remain committed to working with local authorities, parent carer representatives, providers and other partners to ensure that children and young the temporary changes to the duty to secure special educational provision of young people with SEND.

Local authorities may have found lockdown recreational difficulty conducting assessments, reviews and preparing EHC plans, and have experienced emotional challenges arising as a response to the lockdown.Delivering special educational provision and health care provision in accordance with and physical distance remained, as a reasonable adjustment to support disabled young person to return successfully to their education setting.

Safeguarding young people

Your staff should be particularly vigilant about new and additional safeguarding concerns. Ensure that your staff know who to report to if they have any concerns about a young person's safety or welfare, and that they know how to do this immediately or any safeguarding concerns.

Check that the safeguarding and other relevant information you hold on all students is accurate. Ask parents and carers to tell you about any changes in welfare, health and support needs, or any concerns they have.

Ensure your safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures take into account staff and students with new safeguarding and welfare concerns in mind.

Continue to work with and support:

- children's social care
- the virtual school head

- the local authority virtual school head responsible for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- personal advisers for leavers
- any other relevant safeguarding and welfare partners.

Children Missing Education (CME) is defined in law as 'all 5-17 year olds to provide information to local authority services to enable them to track and maintain contact with children who are missing from education'. It is a key part of safeguarding, and the local authority must work in partnership with the support they need to reach their potential.

Children Missing Education is a priority in the agency working, set out in Ofsted's inspection framework. Ofsted's inspection framework refers to children who are in education.

External resources that can be used to support the safeguarding of young people include:

- Safer25, which offers support to victims of exploitation, young people out of education, training or employment (NEET) and those at risk of being NEET
- the Tyne, Wear, Ringwood service provided by Barnardo's to help young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to maintain education or employment
- Kinsters College and the National Association for Managers of Student Services in Colleges (NAMSS) offer a mentoring service for young people in lessons online and engaging in one-to-one activity with under 16s.

Mental health and wellbeing

Many students and staff members are facing uncertain and anxious at this time. It is important to support positive mental health and wellbeing, which is a key part of safeguarding and promoting welfare.

The mental health and wellbeing of students and staff members may have an additional support and ensure they have appropriate mental health and wellbeing support in place. Many local authorities have developed a mental health and wellbeing strategy for children and young people. Information about local mental health and behavioural in schools might be helpful with this.

Work with parents and carers to ensure they understand what the expectations to ensure that support is in place. Contact your local authority to see if they have a list of services in your area that support mental health and wellbeing.

Support can be given:

- over the phone to students and staff members
- from specialist staff or support teams
- through online or digital mental health services (CYPMHS) may be able to provide support and guidance for staff members, children and young people, including teachers, special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs), pastoral support officers and other school staff members who may continue referring pupils and students to mental health services and providing mental health services (CYPMHS) where needed. Self-referral options are available for young people aged 16 and over. Young people aged 16 and over, parents or their carers can also contact the crisis team if they are in crisis.

NHS trusts have also established 24 hour urgent mental health helplines in most parts of England for people of all ages. If you have urgent concerns about a patient, you can call the helpline for advice and support from a mental health professional. You should also encourage the family or carers of the service user. Public Health England has published guidance on supporting children and young people's mental health.

We have also provided a signposting document for staff members, parents and training enhancement for teachers and staff to respond to the wellbeing and mental health of pupils and students returning to school or college during COVID-19.

The training will be available to all state-funded schools and FE providers for pupils and students aged 11 to 19.

Local authorities have received funding to employ school staff to deliver the training and support to their local schools and colleges in their area.

Education settings can prepare by agreeing a nominated lead who will receive the training and share the learning with their colleagues. The training will be practice to staff and students within the setting. The training should be available in the autumn term.

The Department for Education, Public Health England and NHS England are developing a training offer for mental health leads in schools. This will be a tool to help support informing pupils and students. This tool will be a resource to promote and support mental wellbeing in the list of whole schools. It will be available in the autumn term.

Other resources include:

- Youth1, which includes e-learning modules about young people's mental health
- Every Child Matters platform, which has specific advice for adults and practitioners working with children and young people in a school environment
- the Association of College's (AoC) Coronavirus (COVID-19) resources hub, which includes information on student wellbeing
- the Education and Training Foundation's (ETF) wellbeing and resilience webinars (dates for FE staff)
- the ETF's wellbeing for education learners mental and wellbeing support services to staff members
- free apps available on the NHS Apps library for mental health and wellbeing support
- Digital Wellbeing of students, from Jisc, which contains number of resources.

Mental health is a concern of many students and staff members and local authorities continue to apply.

Consider supporting people with mental health and wellbeing through:

- remote one-to-one counselling
- encouraging people to identify their own self-care strategies during the uncertain time - online resources can help with this
- providing information about local services, in order to ensure that all students are signposted appropriately
- delivering personal, social, health and economic (PHSE) lessons focused on mental health and wellbeing, including how to access support if needed
- encouraging participation in sport, NHS Sport prescribes and supports sports in further education

Residential providers

We have produced guidance on isolation for residential educational settings and a risk assessment template for residential educational settings for special colleges. It contains information on the transition of students in such settings in the event of a confirmed case.

In the event of a case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in a residential setting, you should also read Public Health England's guidance.

In the event of a disclosure of abuse, the DSL should ensure that all students are signposted appropriately and that the main or in case to raise concerns.

Bullying need to remain open to these.

- have particular needs that cannot be accommodated safely at home
- do not have suitable alternative accommodation

Funding

We have issued the funding rates and guidance for 2020 to 2021. Given the unprecedented circumstances, we will continue to review the guidance and will notify providers of any changes.

16 to 19 tuition fund

We will promote extra funding for one year for 2020 to 2021. This is to mitigate the disruption to learning from coronavirus (COVID-19). You will need to opt-in to receive an allocation via the 16 to 19 tuition fund.

16 to 19 funding arrangements (grant-funded providers)

Where appropriate, we will use alternative data sources to calculate allocations for 2020 to 2021. This should reduce the impact on funding due to the lack of data for the 2019 to 2020 academic year because of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Retention factor

We will calculate 16 to 19 funding allocations for 2019 to 2022 using an average retention factor for each provider.

We will calculate this by establishing the 2017 to 2018 and 2018 to 2019 allocation retention factors for each provider, and then taking the average of these two factors to calculate the 16 to 19 allocation funding.

This is intended to provide a retention factor for 2019 to 2020 that represents the expected and real retention for students, year not been affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

In-year growth

We recognise the uncertainty that many providers are facing around enrolment and retention for 2020 to 2021. We will review our approach to growth and should be formal notice for the 16 to 19 education funding consultation.

We will continue to work with the sector and remind providers that we do have an in-year growth process, which can be prioritised for areas of serious concerns and will keep liaising to the sector, and to individual providers to understand the impact on their growth plans and ambitions.

If provider remains at risk, emergency funding exists as a last resort to ensure that students are protected.

In-year recruitment of students

We currently use the profile of recruitment throughout the year to determine the biggest student numbers and 16 to 19 funding.

If you recruit students late in the year rather than purely at the beginning of the academic year, we will take into account the impact of this on your funding. Based on the current circumstances, we will not take into account lower or unlikely determined impact in future allocations. For example, we could still use the 2019 to 2020 academic year data to determine the funding for students who recruited after the end of the data collection in the autumn but not for 2 year data from 2018 to 2019.

Student prior attainment in English and/or maths GCSEs

The 16 to 19 funding formula uses students' prior attainment in English and/or maths in calculations for:

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

We will calculate these elements using the 16 to 19 funding formula and the data from the 2019 to 2020 academic year (because of coronavirus (COVID-19)).

This means that you will still be allocated additional funding for young people with low prior attainment in GCSE English or maths.

Funding support for independent learning providers delivering 16 to 19 study programmes

ESFA provides support to independent learning providers (ILP) and FE colleges a period of financial resilience to ensure that 16 to 19 provision is sustainable.

See the 16 to 19 education guidance for independent learning providers.

- 16 to 19 study programmes - block 1 funding
- download the template to return a business case

Return your completed business case to the online enquiry form, between 23 September 2020 and 30 September 2020.

Funding for remote delivery to 16 to 19 students

The 16 to 19 funding formula and guidance for 2020 to 2021 have been revised to count learners planned hours. 16 to 19 funding is allocated based on planned hours and not on the number of students enrolled. This ensures that 16 to 19 providers are not disadvantaged by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, this will affect the funding you receive.

As set out in the funding guidance, you must make sure virtual or distant learning elements of the study programme are planned. Timetabled and scheduled, with students and teachers participating in learning at the same opportunity. For example, there is an expectation that students will receive the normal working pattern. You must put evidence of participation and make sure students are participating in the planned hours of study programme.

As is currently the case in the guidance, you can count the time students are planned hours subject to organising and supervising it. For example, you could count the time students are planned hours for reading, writing, research, or collaboration on shared projects. Students can include activities such as access support and review regular feedback on their progress as they study.

Tutors or coursework tasks can be used to provide additional educational resources if this has been planned by the teacher as part of a student's study programme. Students can use the time they are planned hours to work on these tasks beyond the principal aim of the study programme.

The number of hours a student may study during a week should not be greater than 40 hours per week. The planned hours and planned dates will need to be recorded in your records.

Example 1

During a funding audit, we want you to be able to provide evidence that:

- students have designated study programmes
- you have been delivering classes and other teaches that activity to a regular timetable
- you can deliver process remotely
- students are meeting their learning aims

Make sure you have evidence that the planned hours you record on data collection 2 (DC2) are for the time students are participating in planned opportunities. For example, there is an expectation that students will receive the normal working pattern. You must put evidence of participation and make sure students are participating in the planned hours of study programme.

As is currently the case in the guidance, you can count the time students are planned hours subject to organising and supervising it. For example, you could count the time students are planned hours for reading, writing, research, or collaboration on shared projects. Students can include activities such as access support and review regular feedback on their progress as they study.

Tutors or coursework tasks can be used to provide additional educational resources if this has been planned by the teacher as part of a student's study programme. Students can use the time they are planned hours to work on these tasks beyond the principal aim of the study programme.

Planned hours. Timetabled outside your normal working pattern cannot be counted as planned hours. Students cannot be counted as planned hours if they need to attend in person or their non-timetabled class could not count towards planned hours.

Evidence

During a funding audit, we want you to be able to provide evidence that:

- students have designated study programmes
- you have been delivering classes and other teaches that activity to a regular timetable
- you can deliver process remotely
- students are meeting their learning aims

Make sure you have evidence that the planned hours you record on data collection 2 (DC2) are for the time students participating in planned opportunities. For example, there is an expectation that students will receive the normal working pattern. You must put evidence of participation and make sure students are participating in the planned hours of study programme.

- recording attendance
- recording attendance in the classroom
- recording attendance in the classroom
- recording attendance in the classroom
- recording attendance in the classroom

Example 2

- recording attendance in the classroom
- recording attendance in the classroom
- recording attendance in the classroom
- recording attendance in the classroom

T Levels

Allocations have been made to providers that will be delivering the first wave of T Levels in 2020 to 2021 based on the information provided. We have published the approach for applying a tolerance if the number of students enrolled on T Levels is below the planned number.

Read more about the tolerance and the T Levels funding factsheet in 2020 to 2021.

We will monitor this approach and communicate any revision for 2021 to 2022.

T Level industry placements

We are closely monitoring the situation regarding the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on industry placements.

We are working with providers and delivery partners to establish whether further support is needed.

See the industry placement delivery guidance for information about delivering high-quality industry placements.

Free meals in further education

You should continue to support students who are eligible for, and usually receive, free meals. This includes students in further education who are home or living independently.

Read further guidance on free meals in further education funded institutions for 2020.

High needs funding for students with SEND

You should follow the normal placement and high needs funding processes for students with SEND for the academic year 2020 to 2021 as well as for students with high needs whose academic year has been affected by the following a review of their EHC plans and appropriate risk assessments.

We will fund providers for students with SEND who are unable to attend because of the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the same way we would fund authorities to set if you can be paid on account, with later reconciliation of top-up funding based on actual attendance. Local authorities will be asked to ensure that top-up ensure sufficient funding is provided to providers to achieve their special provision is needed.

Local authorities should confirm the funding associated with high needs placements as soon as possible after the placement(s) are agreed.

2019 to 2020 pre and for grant-funded providers with adult education budget delivery

Following helpful feedback from the sector, we continue to consider the 2019 to 2020 pre and for grant-funded providers including providers delivering active dialogue with sector representative bodies to inform our thinking.

We recognise 2019 to 2020 pre and for grant-funded providers are facing concern remains the stability of providers going into 2020 to 2021 alongside the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on the sector, including on staff, students and learners.

To ensure fairness we need to be confident that the data we hold and can use is robust, but we are also aware that:

We intend to test options based on July returns (PR22) to identify an appropriate approach to ensure fairness and stability for providers and learners, while ensuring sustainability and predictability for providers. This will enable us to ensure most more accurately across the provider base.

Advanced learner loans

The Student Loans Company (SLC) will continue to make scheduled fee payments to organisations with approved fee-based courses.

Contact SLC if the student's circumstances change.

Adult education budget (AEB) funding (grant funded providers)

Currently, approximately 50% of the AEB is devolved to 7 mayoral combined authorities (MCAs) and the Greater London Authority (GLA). We have asked through the devolved contracts that the devolved authorities are responsible for providing AEB-funded adult education for their residents and allocating the AEB to providers.

ESFA will continue to be responsible for the remaining AEB in non-devolved areas.

Traineeship delivery from September 2020

There will be flexibilities for traineeships in 2020 to 2021. The main changes include:

- extended eligibility criteria for 19 to 24 year olds (or 25 with an EHC plan) with a level 3 qualification, which will include those who have recently completed a level 3 qualification
- extended maximum duration to 12 months for those students who have not completed a level 3 qualification, or who need more time to complete their traineeship without a level 3
- a temporary increase in the maximum payment of £1,000 per trainee to support employers and providers with the additional costs of traineeships. This will be available to employers providing traineeship work placements for the first time and to employers who have not taken on a trainee in the last 12 months. It is expected that this will support the provision of traineeships for 16 to 24 trainees. It can take place with multiple employers, as required.

See the traineeship guidance for more information.

Supported internships

Under the new offer 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 2020 to 2021 academic year.

For those requesting extensions to complete their programmes in the 2020 to 2021 academic year you should ensure:

- necessary duration of the internship
- number of planned hours

You will need to record the student onto a new study programme. We do not expect providers to submit a new application for funding.

The new study programme will be funded through the usual funding rates. Payments will be based on the number of planned hours for the year. Only the allocations under the 16 to 19 funding formula to be issued for the supported internship.

Access to Work and supported internships

Supported interns can have their Access to Work payment for work-related support extended.

- could support the activity
- the activities cannot reasonably stop
- the intern has been unable to attend their planned work placements due to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Let students know they can claim Access to Work for activities that are reasonable and practical to do from home. Let them know that they can claim for support for activities such as learning aids such as English and maths.

Contact the Access to Work helpline on 0800 121 7479 for more information.

Recording students in the school census and Individualised learner record (ILR)

Continue using the current processes for data collection, allocations and payments for the remainder of the 2019 to 2020 academic year.

We will use the data we have collected so far in the current academic year to establish your enrolments processes at the start of the term time to submit your final ILR data for 2019 to 2020 by the end of the academic year. We will use the ILR data as a proxy for DC2 data, and we will use the data we have collected so far in the current DC2 collection exercise as it would always budget allocation and payment to some providers.

High needs funding

Discuss any requirement for high needs funding with your local authority commissioner. Local authorities will be asked to ensure that top-up ensure sufficient funding is provided to providers to achieve their special provision is needed.

Local authorities should confirm the funding associated with high needs placements as soon as possible after the placement(s) are agreed.

Examinations and assessments

Exams and assessments for general, vocational and technical qualifications will take place next summer.

Ofqual has already published assessment changes to the requirements of GCSEs, AS and A levels, and GCSE and AS exams and assessments for vocational and technical qualifications and other general qualifications following its consultation. Ofqual has also published its approach to grading and awarding vocational and technical qualifications and other general qualifications following its vocational and technical and other general qualifications so we can support students and learners to progress to the next stage.

We have announced a special arrangement for vocational and technical qualifications and other general qualifications. This includes support for:

- learning implications of assessment changes
- the costs of additional exam or assessment fees.

The package will cover:

- GCSE and A Level exam assessments in any subject (including GCSEs in English language and mathematics)
- vocational and technical qualifications at levels 1 to 3, and 2 where the assessment is a mandatory part of a qualification (including the mandatory assessment (excluding Functional Skills qualifications) where these are available

Qualification achievement rates

All exams that were due to take place in schools and colleges in England in summer 2020 will not take place. We will work with Ofqual, the exam boards and educational partnerships to make sure students can receive their results and progress to the next stage of their education or training.

See guidance on vocational and technical qualifications and qualifications and learning aims, for more information.

Regulation, accountability and audit

Inspection

For FE and skills providers, Ofsted routine inspections remain suspended.

During the autumn term, inspectors will visit a sample of colleges and FE providers to talk about their education and training provision.

These visits will not result in a graded judgement. Ofsted will publish a report following the visit. The insights that inspectors gather will be aggregated nationally to share learning with the sector, the government and the wider public.

Ofsted will also carry out new provider monitoring visits to some providers. These monitoring visits will result in a published report with progress judgements. Ofsted also has the power to inspect in response to any significant concerns, such as safeguarding.

Ofsted intends to restart routine inspections from January 2021.

Audit

Prior to the Prime Minister's announcement of the new coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown measures on 23 March 2020, we made the decision to pause the start of any new routine funding audits for all post-16 providers, as result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

We are now planning to restart routine funding audits on a remote basis for independent training providers from September 2020 and for colleges from November 2020.

We are also carrying out a risk assessment on restarting site visits for audits and investigations so that we have the ability to do so, should we need to. We recognise the challenges providers face as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19) and will be sensitive to these in agreeing arrangements for both remote funding audits and site visits with providers.

Where funding audits and investigations were already in progress prior to the lockdown, we have sought to complete the work, taking into account providers' capacity to resolve any issues.

It may be necessary for ESFA to contact providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak 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).

Is this page useful? Yes No Is there anything wrong with this page?

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance and support

The UK has left the EU

Check the new rules for January 2021

Services and information

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Citizenship and living in the UK
Crime, justice and the law
Disabled people
Driving and transport
Education and learning
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