Department for Education

Guidance

Further education (FE) operational guidance

Updated 12 November 2020

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New National Restrictions came into force on Thursday 5 November. Read how these affect this guidance.

Main changes to previous guidance

We have made changes to the guidance on:

- the new restrictions introduced from 5 November 2020 announced by the Prime Minister on 31 October 2020
- delivering exams
- measures that you should take in the teaching and learning environment to ensure 2 metres social distancing and the additional mitigation measures that can be used when this is not possible
- appropriate use of face coverings outside of the teaching and learning environment in the event of local or national restrictions
- what to do if implementing restrictions on on-site learning, specifically the need to contact your Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) territorial lead or caseload manager
- expiry of temporary changes to the law on special educational needs
- what you need to do to record students in the school census for supported internships
- the expansion of traineeship frameworks from September 2020

Introduction

This guidance sets out what further education (FE) and skills providers in England need to know so that students of all ages can benefit from their education and training in full. It explains the actions to take to stay as safe as possible as we continue to respond to the challenges of coronavirus (COVID-19).

The government has published guidance on New National Restrictions from 5 November.

On Thursday 5 November, these national restrictions replaced the local covid alert level measures. The new measures will apply nationally for 4 weeks up to and including Wednesday 2 December. At the end of that period, we will return to a regional approach, based on the latest data.

You should:

- continue 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. Special 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.

Delivering exams

Our exam support service launched at the start of the autumn term to support you, as FE providers, to manage this process.

Public health guidance to support autumn exams has also been published. This guidance sets out arrangements that you should implement when delivering exams in autumn 2020 to enable them to progress in a way which significantly reduces the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Minimising coronavirus (COVID-19) risks

Risk assessment

You have various duties to protect people from harm, as employers, occupiers or due to other duties. This includes taking reasonable steps to protect staff, students and others from coronavirus (COVID-19) within your setting.

You should have active arrangements in place to monitor that the controls are:

- effective
- working as planned
- updated appropriately considering any issues identified and changes in public health advice

More information on what is required of FE providers, and employers in relation to health and safety risk assessments and managing risk, is available in Annex A.

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, or required by regulations, use face coverings.

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).

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

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.

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.

In non-residential settings, students who start displaying coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms while at their setting should, wherever possible, be collected by a member of their family or household. In exceptional circumstances, if this is not possible, and the setting needs to take responsibility for transporting them home, or if a symptomatic student needs to be transported between residential settings, you should do one of the following:

- use a vehicle with a bulkhead or partition that separates the driver and passenger
- the driver and passenger should maintain a distance of 2 metres from each other
- the driver should use PPE, and the passenger should wear a face mask if they are old enough and able to do so

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). Any member of staff who has provided close contact care to someone with symptoms, while wearing PPE and all other members of staff or students who have been in close contact with that person with symptoms, if wearing a face covering, do not need to go home to self-isolate unless:

- the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive
- they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange to have a test)
- they are requested to do so by NHS Test and Trace or the PHE advice service (or PHE local health protection team if escalated).

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 the 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.

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 guidance on cleaning non-healthcare settings.

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, or required by regulations, use of face coverings in FE settings.
New National Restrictions came into force on Thursday 5 November. Read how the New National Restrictions affect this section of the guidance.

The following guidance reflects the position when national restrictions are not in place.

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.

You have the discretion to require the use of face coverings in communal areas where social distancing cannot be safely managed if you believe that it is right in your particular circumstances.

Face coverings must be worn in indoor areas where members of the public interact with staff or students to access goods and services. For example, if an on-site restaurant or hair salon is accessed by the public, these places must comply with face coverings regulations. This also applies where an education provider operates in a community setting such as a public library.

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, if it will provide additional confidence to students and staff.

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 could have a negative impact on learning and teaching and so their use in the classroom should be avoided.

Where local restrictions apply
In the event of new local or national 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 uses

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 to support these students and the staff working with them and is not a reason to deny these students face to face education.

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, with 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.

The overarching principle to apply is reducing the number of contacts between students and staff. This can be achieved through keeping groups separate 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 and 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. Individuals displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) must engage with the NHS Test and Trace process.
You must ensure you understand the NHS Test and Trace process. 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
- 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)

Advice received through the NHS Test and Trace service applies to contacts made outside of the educational setting. You should follow the advice from local PHE teams on managing confirmed cases within the educational setting.

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.

NHS COVID-19 app

The NHS COVID-19 app is available to anyone aged 16 or over to download if they choose. For some young people, particularly some with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), parents will need to decide whether their use of the app is appropriate. This aligns with wider NHS services which are generally offered to those aged 16 or over as routine.

Most students in FE settings will be eligible to use the app. Staff members will also be able to use the app. The use of the NHS COVID-19 app guidance provides information to senior leaders in education settings about how the app works and guidance for its use within schools and FE providers in England.

Testing kits

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.

You 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.

An online portal is now live for you to order additional coronavirus (COVID-19) test kits if they have run out, or are running out, of the initial 10 kits supplied for use in line with our guidance. You will be able to make a new order for test kits 21 days after you receive a delivery confirmation email telling you that your previous supply of test kits has been sent. These kits are only for those who develop one of the symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) and face significant barriers to accessing a test. They will help your symptomatic staff who test negative back to work as soon as they feel well enough, to ensure the continuity of education for students.

You will receive a unique organisation number via email from the Department of Health and Social Care which will be needed to place your order. Please call the Test and Trace helpdesk on 119 if you have not received your unique organisation number or if you have lost your record of it.

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

If someone begins to self-isolate because they have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19) and they get a test which delivers a negative result, 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 or 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. FE providers role in the management of confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19)

You must take swift action when you become aware that someone who has attended your premises has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). You can contact the dedicated advice service introduced by Public Health England (PHE) and delivered by the NHS Business Services Authority. This can be reached by calling the DfE helpline on 0800 046 8687 and selecting option 1 for advice on the action to take in response to a positive case. You will be put through to a team of advisers who will inform you what action is needed based on the latest public health advice.

The advice service 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. If, following triage, further expert advice is required the adviser will escalate your call to the PHE local health protection team.

The advice service (or PHE local health protection team if escalated) will work with you to guide you through the actions you need to take. Based on their advice, 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)
- proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres) with an infected individual
- travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

The advice service (or PHE local health protection team if escalated) will provide definitive advice to you on who must be sent home. To support them in doing so, we recommend you keep a record of students and staff in each group and include a check-in system for anyone using communal or shared areas such as libraries. This should be a proportionate recording process. You do not need to ask students to record everyone they have spent time with each day or ask staff to keep definitive records in a way that is overly burdensome.

A template letter will be provided to you, on the advice of the advice service (or PHE local health protection team if escalated), to send to parents and staff if needed. You must not share the names or details of people with coronavirus (COVID-19) unless essential to protect others.

Household members of those contacts who are sent home do not need to self-isolate themselves unless the student or staff member who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms. If someone in a group that has been asked to self-isolate develops symptoms themselves within their 14-day isolation period they should follow guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection. They should get a test, and:

- if someone who is self-isolating because they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) starts to feel unwell and gets a test for coronavirus themselves, and the test delivers a negative result, they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 14 day isolation period - this is because they could still develop coronavirus (COVID-19) within the remaining days
- if the test result is positive, they should inform their setting immediately, and must isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms (which could mean the self-isolation ends before or after the original 14 day isolation period), their household should self-isolate for at least 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 request evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting students or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

The health protection team will also contact providers directly if they become aware that someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) attended the education setting, as identified by NHS Test and Trace.

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

Reporting actual or suspected cases through the education setting status form (FE colleges only)

Where a college has a suspected or confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19), you should notify us as part of the information submitted in the educational settings status form. All colleges should complete this form by midday each day.

The data you submit is crucial to enabling us to build a national picture of educational provision so that we can focus support more effectively, monitor the impact of the virus, and ensure students are safe. The government also uses this data to inform public health management and planning.

See guidance on how to submit the educational settings status form for more information.

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

If you have 2 or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus (COVID-19) is suspected, you may have an outbreak. You must:

- continue to work with your local health protection team who will be able to advise you if additional action is required
- complete the educational settings status form each day (colleges only)

In some cases, health protection teams may recommend that a larger number of other students self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure, perhaps the whole site or a specific group.

If you are implementing the system of controls, addressing the risks you have identified and therefore reducing transmission risks, whole site closure based on cases within your setting will not generally be necessary, and should not be considered except on the advice of health protection teams.

Off-site provision and work placements

External work placements

Minimising contact and mixing between people reduces transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). Training providers and employers must do everything possible to minimise contacts and mixing while delivering training and assessment.

You should consider how students on placements, from different workplaces, mix with other students and staff when training in an educational setting. Information on how to group students can be found in the system of controls section.

It is important that you involve staff, students and the organisations who provide work placements to co-produce guidance, student charters or agreements, making clear the responsibilities for staying safe and protecting others. By involving others, the guidance is more likely to be adhered to. Where relevant, other outside bodies that may be affected (for example, suppliers, transport providers) may also be involved.

Site safety

You should take account of public health guidance on staying safe outside one's home and in public spaces. The public health guidance is to reduce social contact, maintain social distance, adopt good hand and respiratory hygiene measures, and self-isolate and get tested if you have symptoms. You can read guidance on social distancing.

If you deliver higher education provision in your setting you should also read the higher education reopening buildings and campuses guidance.

Ventilation

You should ensure that all indoor and covered areas have good ventilation in addition to other methods of risk reduction. This can help reduce the risk of spreading coronavirus (COVID-19) by aerosol transmission, so focus should be given to improving general ventilation.

Where possible, poorly ventilated spaces should be adapted to improve ventilation. 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. If that is not possible, they should not be used as a teaching or learning location.

You should consider ways to maintain and increase the supply of outside air and prevent pockets of stagnant air in occupied spaces. Advice on this can be found in the HSE guidance on air conditioning and ventilation during the coronavirus outbreak.

To balance the need for increased ventilation while maintaining a comfortable temperature, the following measures should also be used as appropriate:

- opening high level windows in preference to low level to reduce draughts
- increasing the ventilation while spaces are unoccupied (for example, between classes, during break and lunch, when a room is unused)
- providing flexibility to allow additional, suitable indoor clothing
- rearranging furniture where possible to avoid direct drafts

Heating should be used as necessary to ensure comfort levels are maintained particularly in occupied spaces.

Estates

You should look to maximise the use of their site and any associated available space.

Following a risk assessment, you may determine that small adaptations to your site are required, such as additional wash basins. This will be at your discretion, based on your circumstances.

Additional advice on safely reoccupying buildings can be found in the CIBSE guidance on emerging from lockdown.

Teaching and learning environment 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, staff should maintain a 2 metre distance from each other and from students wherever possible, or if not possible additional social distancing mitigations will be required. This should not prevent the delivery of a full curriculum offer.

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, for example, when students are required to work in close proximity or where there is high use of items such as apparatus and machinery which cannot be washed down between uses, additional mitigation measures should be put in place.

Additional mitigation measures

These include:

- increasing the frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning
- keeping the activity time involved as short as possible
- using screens or barriers to separate students from each other
- seating students side-by-side and facing forwards, rather than face-to-face or side on
- moving unnecessary furniture out of rooms to make more space

Some FE courses, such as vocational training, healthcare related courses and the performing arts may pose particular risks of aerosol, droplet and surface transmission and may therefore warrant increased consideration, for example, face coverings, ventilation or cleaning in accordance with guidance issued for the relevant professional working arrangements.

Measures elsewhere

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).

Performing arts

This section of the guidance is designed to help you understand how to minimise risk during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak for performing arts provision.

Studies have indicated that it is the cumulative aerosol transmission from both those performing in and attending events that is likely to create risk. This is particularly evident for singing and shouting, but with appropriate safety mitigation and consideration, singing, wind and brass teaching can still take place.

Activities should be undertaken in line with this guidance and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) guidance for professionals and non-professionals which is in the working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19): performing arts guidance.

Performing arts courses, in normal circumstances, may involve a considerable amount of practical face-to-face teaching and assessment.

You should consider new ways of delivering in-person teaching and assessment where this is required. This should 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.

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

New National Restrictions came into force on Thursday 5 November. Read how the New National Restrictions affect this section of guidance.

Students and staff can engage in singing and playing wind and brass instruments in line with this guidance and working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19): performing arts but routine 2 metre social distancing should be maintained.

You should observe strict social distancing between each singer or player, and between singers or 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.

Further measures that you can take include:

- playing instruments and singing in groups should take place outdoors wherever possible
- 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 the HSE guidance on air conditioning and ventilation during the coronavirus outbreak
- 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

Physical activity and sports

New National Restrictions came into force on Thursday 5 November. Read how the New National Restrictions affect this section of guidance.

Organised extra-curricular activities and competitive team sports conducted in line with coronavirus (COVID-19) secure guidance, may continue, subject to any national restructions or local restrictions.

Organised indoor sport, for groups of more than six, is permitted where it is part of education or training provision, or as part of official team sports. This applies to all age groups. However, sport should take place outside where possible.

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.

At all times participants should comply with coronavirus (COVID-19) secure measures including the system of controls for their setting and limit social interaction outside the sporting activity. 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.

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 clinically vulnerable or extremely clinically vulnerable

New National Restrictions came into force on Thursday 5 November. Read how the New National Restrictions affect this section of guidance.

Managing national and local restrictions

The COVID-19 contain framework sets out how national and local partners will work together to prevent, contain and manage local outbreaks.

The government has published guidance on New National Restrictions from 5 November. The new measures will apply nationally for four weeks up to Wednesday 2 December. At the end of the period, we will return to a regional approach, based on the latest data.

During periods of national or local restrictions the expectation is that education and childcare provision should continue as normal. The government has been very clear that limiting attendance at education settings should only be done as a last resort.

Clarification on the circumstances where it may be necessary to restrict on-site delivery and move to greater online learning

We fully recognise the outstanding job teachers, leaders and governors in the FE sector are doing to deliver learning to young people and adults in an unprecedented situation. The government will continue to prioritise the wellbeing and long-term futures of our young people and will not be closing schools, colleges or universities. It remains very important for children and young people to attend, to support their wellbeing and education.

Nationally education settings have been prioritised to remain open for on-site provision ahead of other parts of the economy. This reflects the importance of young people's education. Therefore, under national restrictions and all local COVID alert levels (including 'high', and 'very high'), our priority is to continue to ensure that students aged 16 to 19 can attend the majority of their planned hours on-site, as this provides the best circumstances for most students to learn. Consequently, providers should only restrict on-site delivery if:

- they have received written public health advice to do so
- it is strictly necessary for operational reasons, with all other mitigations having been exhausted

National decision-making affecting multiple education settings in a locality

Education is exempt from many of the local and national restrictions, this is because we recognise how important it is that students continue to receive a good standard of education and training.

Annex 3 of the COVID-19 contain framework a guide for local decision-makers which sets out the education tiers will only be applied during local restrictions as a last resort and in a phased manner to retain as much face-to-face education in the affected locality. The decision to restrict education across a local area rests with the Secretary of State. Additional guidance will be provided if government takes the decision to move education in a locality to a different tier.

Flexibility for providers to deliver learning remotely within our guidance

There is already significant flexibility for you to deliver a proportion of learning remotely – as you were able to do before coronavirus (COVID-19). You should consider whether more post-19 learning can be delivered remotely, but only if this provides a good quality education.

The majority of learning hours for all 16 to 19-year olds should still be delivered on-site, other than in exceptional circumstances. This flexibility goes substantially further than for the schools sector, recognising that a number of providers have established good practice in remote delivery. However, we also recognise that remote delivery cannot fully replace on-site learning particularly for courses focused on occupational competence and that on-site provision will be particularly important for some groups of learners, including vulnerable learners and those who need to do practical skills and access specialist equipment. Even if providers have to move the majority of their provision to remote delivery for a period of time, arrangements should be made to support vulnerable young people and those without access to devices or connectivity at home with suitable access to staff and a safe place to learn.

Decisions to restrict on-site delivery for public health reasons due to a local outbreak

Decisions to restrict opening for public health reasons should only take place where there has been clear public health advice to do so, and this is provided in writing. This is to ensure clarity around the basis on which the decision has been made. This is normal practice for PHE, and both local PHE teams and Local Authority public health directors should be aware of this expectation.

Where you have been advised by local health teams to substantially reduce on-site attendance in response to local outbreaks or community transmission, please contact your ESFA territorial lead or caseload manager in the first instance or, if this is not possible use fed.covidcentral@education.gov.uk.

It is important for you to inform the ESFA so that we understand the contingency plans and plans for communicating the decision. This should not delay any urgent decisions which may need to be implemented quickly.

Decisions to restrict on-site delivery for operational reasons

We recognise that providers may have operational reasons where for a short period of time, the level of on-site learning for 16 to 19 year old students may be less than 50%. Such a reduction should only take place where necessary, and for a short period. Over a longer period (for example, the term), learners should continue to receive a majority of their learning on-site and on-site delivery should count for the majority of planned learning hours for all 16 to 19 students.

If it is strictly necessary for you to decide to significantly reduce on-site delivery, please engage with your ESFA territorial leads or caseload managers, in the first instance. You should do this before communicating any decision, so they can understand the position and discuss the mitigations you are putting in place. If you are unable to reach territorial leads or caseload managers, please contact fed.covidcentral@education.gov.uk, this should not delay any exceptionally urgent decisions.

Examples of circumstances in which providers may find it necessary to make adjustments are:

- a short planned 'testing period' of their online learning systems to ensure that staff and students are ready to move to online learning as a contingency if needed. We would normally expect this only to last a couple of days
- a planned reduction of the number of 16 to 19 students who are on-site during busy exam and assessment periods when it would otherwise be more difficult to implement established infection control measures. Any restrictions should be proportionate to the need, and we would normally expect significant restrictions to last no longer than the period of exams and assessments
- in the event of a very high level of staff absence. It may be appropriate to consider a mixed model, with some teachers delivering lessons remotely to students who are on-site and supervised by other staff. A reduction in on-site delivery should be proportionate to the scale of the staffing challenge

Support on-site for learners who need it

Should a restriction of on-site delivery be necessary, it will be important to preserve provision on-site for all students who need it. This includes supporting vulnerable young people, the children of key workers who need it, and students who do not have access to digital devices or connectivity at home. For

Transport

Social distancing has significantly reduced available public transport capacity. Transport for London has up to now been able to provide 70% of its usual bus and tube services.

The guidance on transport for schools and other places of education provides information about how children and young people can travel to school and college in the autumn. It also provides information about how children and young people can travel independently and safely.

You are advised to work with your local transport authority to identify when it might be necessary to make changes to school and college transport and to the arrangement of school and college transport authorities have received additional funding to support the travel of pupils and students to school, college and young people in their regular. Funding has been allocated to local authorities to provide additional home to school transport capacity. Local authorities (through their local transport authorities) have been allocated funding to provide additional cycle routes to help plan and manage travel demand.

Dedicated PE and sports premises transport

Students on dedicated transport services do not mix with the general public on the journey to and from the sports premises and are accompanied by a college minder. Students do not mix between different groups on the journey.

Local authorities will not be required to uniformly apply the social distancing measures on home to school transport services. Local authorities will, however, exercise discretion in the application of the social distancing measures provided. This will vary both to minimise disease transmission risks and to ensure that pupils and students can access their education. Local authorities will participate in discussions about home to school transport and working with the community each day.

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

- coaches requiring pairing as the same students each day
- minibuses
- minibuses that are used by different students on different days
- services for students with SEND and those with complex medical conditions (SEND)

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

Speak to your transport provider to confirm the approach they are adopting. Check it follows the guidance. Also, check that it follows, wherever possible, the:

- social distancing in reasonable ever-withdrawn
- hygiene measures in place
- improved guarding and hygiene in place
- students should (wear their bands before boarding transport and again on disembarking
- the use of face coverings is provided, where appropriate
- ventilation is provided, where appropriate
- ventilation of fresh air (from outside) is provided, where practicable through opening windows and ceiling vents

Children and young people aged 11 and over should wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated school and college transport from the start of the autumn term. Pupils in Year 7 and above should wear a face covering when travelling in public transport. 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 network to travel to school and college. Students should be encouraged to travel by cycle or walk wherever possible. If not, then participants 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 times.

Encourage pupils and students to walk or cycle where possible.

Refer students and staff using public transport to the cycle travel guidance for schools and colleges. Also, refer them to the guidance for people who are travelling in England to or from another country. Refer students and staff using public transport, where they are exempt from wearing face coverings, face coverings and face masks.

Refer students and staff using public transport to the cycle travel guidance for schools and colleges. Also, refer them to the guidance for people who are travelling in England to or from another country. Refer students and staff using public transport, where they are exempt from wearing face coverings, face coverings and face masks.

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

Moving between settings

Consider whether you need any additional provisions in place for students who are:

- attend more than one site or different provision
- move between a nursery provision and secondary school part-of or apprenticeship
- attend a specialist provision

Students who are vulnerable can be extremely flexible. It is up to you, the school, to decide how students who are vulnerable will attend school. If an apprenticeship training is delivered, and students are vulnerable, then the apprenticeship provider should be consulted. Also, consider the most suitable method to balance minimising risk to students who are vulnerable with providing a full educational experience. For example, a block release delivery method may be better for students who are vulnerable.

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

Temporary staff and visitors

Consider the number and frequency of visitors to your setting where staff and students are vulnerable. Consider how you will facilitate safe arrangements for managing and monitoring visits.

To help you minimise the number of staff attending your premises, consider:

- using larger 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 unchanged.

You can resume non-overnight domestic educational visits, unless advised against by your local authority. Consider the risk assessment for visiting students with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) (for example, workplace visits, travel training). You should also make use of outdoor spaces. Consider how students who are vulnerable can safely participate in educational visits. Consider the suitability of alternatives to adapt the educational visits to ensure they can be safely done. You should consult the DfE's guidance on educational visits for more information and advice.

The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) provides information on how overseas international trips during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Parts relevant to the UK education system and school or college visits. Also, consider contact your local insurance provider.

Education and training delivery

What we expect of FE providers

We expect you to continue delivery so that students of all ages can benefit from their education and training in full. This means we expect you to:

- fully deliver planned hours for students of all ages from your normal term start date in autumn 2020. Where this is not possible, you should let us know as soon as possible
- ensure that on-site delivery continues, unless further restrictions are implemented in your area or nationally, and that it is fully supported by high quality remote delivery where that is effective teaching practice
- ensure that students who are vulnerable can attend on-site provision and focus on addressing the barriers to their participation in education
- put in place additional support for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people who are struggling with attending whether they are remote or on-site sessions
- 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 have developed high quality remote education offers. We expect this continue in the autumn year.

An increase in the use of remote delivery is reasonable provided that:

- it complements the overall offer and is in the best interests of the qualified education and engagement with students
- it does not lead to students being in a supervised learning hours for all 16 to 19 study programme students, or students who are vulnerable
- restrictions are put in place to contain local outbreaks or if individuals need to self-isolate
- appropriate support for students who are vulnerable is in place and meets the reasonable needs of students

Adult students have requested a further extension of remote delivery is compulsory to 16 to 19 year olds. However where national or local restrictions are in place, we expect that 16 to 19 year olds will return to on-site provision. We recognise that some students will need to be shielding for long-term objectives. Where learning needs to continue to take place on-site to enable students to achieve their qualification, providers should make reasonable efforts to continue in a safe and secure way.

The Ofsted's remote provision additional guidance on the different ways that providers can deliver remote education.

The flexibility to extend the Adult Education Budget (AEB) to areas where the AEB budget is devolved, contract the relevant mayoral authority concerning adult student support arrangements.

Support for high quality remote and blended education

EdTech demonstrator programme

You can apply for support from other schools and colleges with a proven track record in using EdTech effectively to support their EdTech demonstrator programme. The programme offers a wide range of support including webinars and training on:

- the effective use of teaching platforms
- digital capacity
- meeting the needs of pupils with SEND
- promoting student and teacher wellbeing during remote teaching

Developing EdTech and online teaching skills

The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) offers support for teachers to develop their online teaching skills.

Teachers can participate in a free online course that will develop their digital skills. The course is aimed at teachers in the New Ofsted Inspection Framework (Ofsted's new inspection framework). The course is also suitable for teaching assistants, teachers developing their digital skills. The online learning modules include topics on:

- using devices
- handling information
- staying safe online

ETF have also developed a guide for FE staff for EdTech and essential digital skills for teaching and learning. The ETF also offer a digital mentor programme to offer a 30-minute session with a digital mentor. Also, signposters on the Enhance Digital Teaching Platform as well as other useful resources which can supplement the EdTech demonstrator programme and support with delivering teaching and learning online.

The Future Learn platform includes free courses to develop skills to effectively deliver remote learning. These include:

- how to teach online
- teaching online with confidence
- use of technology in blended learning

Thinkwell, Gaslight and Kaizen also provide free training to help teachers use their platforms to hold interactive lessons. Certification is subject to fee.

Digital curriculum content and resources

Jisc provides curriculum content support qualifications and national standards for 5 vocational subject areas:

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

They also provide a wide range of guides for FE providers to set up vocational and academic subjects and qualifications.

The Standard Learning Platform has FE specific resources across a range of subjects and levels. There is a free to access library resource.

Possibility UK is a dedicated resource for FE providers. This includes:

- A science where hybrid, which provides resources to support students to learn in a hybrid way
- Video Tube and Jisc Learn, which provide short-video resources and tutorials

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

Support from provider associations

Visit your provider association's website for resources and support on remote and blended learning:

- Association of Colleges
- Sixth Form Colleges Association
- Association of Independent Learning Providers
- NCFE
- Pearson

Workforce

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

All staff working on-site should follow the system of controls to minimise the risks of transmission. Following the system of controls will ensure that the risks to all staff significantly. Some roles, such as some administrative roles, may be suitable for home working, and we encourage providers to consider this approach.

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

Discuss any concerns individuals may have about returning to work with them. We encourage you to be flexible and try to accommodate individual circumstances if appropriate.

Staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable

New National Restrictions came into force on Thursday 5 November. Read how the New National Restrictions affect the section of guidance.

Staff who are clinically vulnerable

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

People who live with someone who is clinically vulnerable can also return to work.

Clinically vulnerable staff have concerns around their individual circumstances, you should discuss these concerns and be flexible in seeking to address them.

Staff who are pregnant

Pregnant workers are in the 'clinically vulnerable' category and are generally advised to follow the system of controls in the workplace, as are those who are vulnerable. For more information, pregnant women can also read guidance and advice on coronavirus (COVID-19) and pregnancy from the Royal College of Midwives. Pregnant women who are concerned about their health should be discussed, through their normal ante-natal arrangements, with their midwife or their home or workplace.

Employers should undertake a risk assessment of pregnant women in line with The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSW). Pregnant women are not required to inform their employer of their circumstances but may want to do so if they have concerns about their health and safety at work.

We recommend that it is good practice to follow the same principles for pregnant students, in line with wider health and safety obligations.

Staff who may otherwise be at increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19)

Some people with particular characteristics may be at comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) compared to others. Read the Public Health England's (PHE) guidance on disparities in the risks and outcomes of coronavirus (COVID-19) and supplement your risk assessments and provide guidance for their actions. It is clear that treating very casually presents a risk to people who are vulnerable. Ensure that staff who are vulnerable are treated in a close proximity, have access to appropriate PPE and are provided adjustments to sanitation measures immediately afterwards including washing hands.

You should continue to ensure that you meet your obligations under Equality Act. Duties of care towards staff, students and visitors, including under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Equality Act 2010.

Recruitment

You can continue recruiting members of staff.

You can still access the Teaching Agency Supplier Further organisations. This programme supports the recruitment of industry professionals to teaching roles in the FE sector.

If you are recruiting English, maths or SENCO teachers, you can apply for a retention incentive payment (TRI) grant worth £6,000.

Teacher training

You should continue initial teacher education (ITE), including teacher training placements, wherever possible.

Supporting staff

All employers have a duty of care to their employees, and this extends to their mental health.

Because some staff may be particularly anxious about returning, you may need extra systems in place to support staff wellbeing. Read about the extra mental health support for teachers.

Supporting vulnerable young people

Some vulnerable young people are those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including those who are children in need who are a child in need who are children who are looked after
- have an EHC plan
- are identified as other vulnerable vulnerable by educational providers or social care services, for example, those who are at risk of harm or neglect
- young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services
- adopted children
- those at risk of becoming 'not in employment, education or training' (NEET)
- those having mental concerns/issues
- those who are young carers
- those who may have difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)

Work with the local authority's children's

Transition to FE

Maintain contact to work with schools and local authorities to support transitions. This includes sharing any relevant welfare and child protection information with your new students and discharging your duties and responsibilities for safeguarding children.

Some young people might need additional mental health and wellbeing support. Use extra support where necessary and possible. See the mental health and wellbeing section for more information.

Some young people who are NEET may be more likely and agree to a plan to participate in education, employment or training (EET) in the autumn. For looked after children and care leavers, this may mean working with the virtual school head teacher, personal advisers and children's social care services.

Consider extra support for students at high risk of being NEET. A trusted adviser can help provide tailored support and guidance, and support with other barriers.

Supporting students with special education needs (SEND)

General FE settings

From September 2020, all young people with SEND, with or without education, health and care (EHC) plans, will be supported to participate in education or training. Providers will be expected to make reasonable adjustments in Part 4, as set out in section 4 of the Equality Act 2010, to consider the needs of all students who have SEND, including those who are vulnerable, and those who are shielding or shielding in the future. Providers should also make reasonable adjustments to ensure students who are vulnerable can participate in education and training.

Supporting students who are vulnerable or high risk of being NEET. A trusted adviser can help provide tailored support and guidance, and support with other barriers.

Transition of students with SEND back to college

Many young people who have found lockdown exceptionally difficult socially and emotionally will need extra support to make a successful transition back to education, training or any other meaningful activities. Colleges and providers (including discussion with the young person or their parents) and offer additional support, including mentoring and pastoral support to support a student young person to secure education successfully.

Special post-16 institutions

All students should be ready for the return of their planned hours on site for courses normally delivered face to face. This includes those in special post-16 institutions, including those with complex and severe learning difficulties and disabilities. Those under active special care are advised to self-isolate, please see here.

Safeguarding young people

Your staff should be particularly expert about love and pastoral safeguarding and welfare issues. Many young people will have found lockdown difficult, and for those less young children at school, it should be a time of great joy and reunion with their friends and teachers. Children will need to be reassured and reintegrated back into school and contact with their peers and people. This will help local authorities to identify those children who may need additional support and services, and to ensure that support they need to be their protection.

Continue following statutory guidance on child agency working, set out in working together to safeguard children and keeping children safe in education.

Relevant resources that will support the safeguarding of young people include:

- Safe Lives, which offers support to victims of exploitation – young people can contact the Youth Support Service for advice and support on exploitation.
- The Law Society, Resources for lawyers supporting children and young people in England who are experiencing harm and increased advocacy during lockdown.
- Lucy Faithfull Foundation, Online safety and keeping children safe in online activity with under 18s, developed by Kinloss College and the National Association for Therapeutic Education (NATE).

Mental health and wellbeing

Many students and staff members advice feeling uncertain and anxious at this time. It is important to recognise that this is a normal response to an abnormal situation, and is necessary for young people to engage in.

Your school's planning and response to the return of staff who may need additional support and ensure they have appropriate mental health and wellbeing support in place. Your local authority will be working with those who need additional support and will be providing a range of services. The guidance for mental health and behaviour in schools might be helpful with this.

Work with your local authority and their partners to ensure that children and young people who need additional mental health support can access it. Provide a list of services in your area that provide support for young people.

Support can be given over the telephone or online, and should be provided by specialist staff or support services.

Children and young people's mental health services (CYPMHS) may be able to provide support remotely. Professionals involved with children and young people who have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) or Children's Social Care (CSC) support, or who are receiving mental health support should continue referring young people to their local NHS children and young people's mental health services (CYPMHS) in the usual way. Children and young people who are not currently receiving support from CYPMHS but are facing difficulties, may wish to contact their GP or refer to their local CYPMHS.

NHS trusts have also established 24/7 mental health crisis teams (dedicated to most parts of England for people of all ages. If you have urgent concerns about a young person's mental health, you should contact your local crisis team. Children and young people in mental health crisis should be seen by a crisis team in the service. Public Health England has published guidance on supporting children and young people mental health over the coronavirus.

We have also provided a webinar for education return expert. This consists of a presentation by Dr Nina Rosenberg, Clinical Lead for Children and Young Mental Health Partnership of London and a panel discussion with Ofsted, DfE and Public Health England.

Training will be available to all state funded schools and FE providers to staff and students from September 2020.

Local authorities have received funding to employ school staff to deliver the training to educate children and young people mental health support that will return during in March 2021.

Education settings can prepare by opening a nominated lead who will review the training and will have the capability to then disseminate the learning and support to other staff members. Training will be rolled out to all state funded schools in the academic year 2020-21.

The Department for Education, Public Health England and NHS England are developing a mental health and wellbeing support for schools and colleges to have to support returning pupils and students. This will include measures to promote and support mental wellbeing in the lead up of online resources to help manage mental health.

Other resources that will support:

- Thrive LDN, which provides a training offer for schools and colleges to support mental health.
- The Every Mind Matters platform, which has specific advice for adults and young people on maintaining mental wellbeing during the coronavirus outbreak, and how to seek support.
- The Association of Children's Hospices's Coronavirus (COVID-19) resources hub, which includes advice for families.
- The Education and Training Foundation's mental health and emotional wellbeing hub for FE providers.
- Education Support's mental health and wellbeing support service for education staff.
- The Mental Health Foundation on the NHS App library for mental health and wellbeing support
- Mental Wellbeing of students mostly from Ofsted, which provides a number of useful resources.
- The Samaritans, special provides guidance on how to prepare for and respond to a suspected suicide in FE colleges.

Mental health is an important part of the offer to students in education and their principles continue to apply.

Consider supporting students with their mental health and wellbeing through:

- remote one to one counselling
- encouraging students to identify their own self-care strategies during lockdown and how they can continue to use them in the future
- completing wellbeing checks at the start of each lesson to ensure that all students are engaged and participating
- personal, social, health and economic (PHSE) lessons focused on topics such as coping with change, loss, grief, and managing feelings
- encouraging participation in sport, PE, Dance and other supports sports in further education

Residential providers

We have produced guidance on guidance for residential educational settings including boarding schools, and residential special schools and residential special colleges. It provides advice on how to manage self-isolation in the case of a suspected or confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Providers of residential provision, you are under a legal duty to ensure that your students are safe and protected from the risks of coronavirus infection in their self-isolation period. Residential settings in which one is already operating should continue to do so, and should take steps to ensure that students are protected from coronavirus infection.

- a lead should be boosted immediately to confirm whether they have coronavirus (COVID-19)
- the isolation guidance for residential settings should be followed, including large-scale or complex cases, and local health protection teams

If a young person with symptoms gets a test and the result is positive

- the young person should be kept in isolation in their room
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- completing wellbeing checks at the start of each lesson to ensure that all students are engaged and participating
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If a young person with symptoms gets a test and the result is positive

- the young person should be kept in isolation in their room
- the young person should be kept in isolation in their room
- completing wellbeing checks at the start of each lesson to ensure that all students are engaged and participating
- personal, social, health and economic (PHSE) lessons focused on topics such as coping with change, loss, grief, and managing feelings
- encouraging participation in sport, PE, Dance and other supports sports in further education

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 you of changes.

16 to 19 tuition fund

We have provided extra funding for one year for 2020 to 2021. This is to mitigate the disruption to learning. We have published the 16 to 19 tuition fund, which will need to agree to receive an allocation on 16 to 19 tuition funding.

16 to 19 funding arrangements (grant-funded providers)

Where appropriate, we will use alternative data sources to calculate allocations for 16 to 19 funding allocations for 2019 to 2022 using an average retention for the last years.

We will calculate this by establishing the 2017 to 2018 and 2018 to 2019 attendance patterns and calculate the average retention for the last two years and use this as a proxy for retention.

This is intended to provide a retention for 2019 to 2020 that represents the expected end year retention for academic year not then affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

This means that you will still be allocated additional funding for young people who are not physically present in the 16 to 19 study programme.

Support for independent learning providers delivering 16 to 19 study programmes

ESFA provides support to independent learning providers (ILPs) that are facing a period of financial recovery due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

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

Funding for remote delivery to 16 to 19 students

The 16 to 19 funding regulations set out the provisions that need to be met in order to receive funding for 16 to 19 study programmes. We have made changes to these regulations in light of how those are affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. We have made changes to the regulations to ensure that students are not adversely affected the funding you receive.

As set out in the funding regulations, you must make sure school or distance learning elements of the study programme are planned, timetabled and delivered. This should be in accordance with the requirements of the 16 to 19 funding guidance. The guidance includes the minimum hours required for each individual student. You must be able to give evidence of this to funding providers.

Examples of eligible provision

As with classroom-based delivery, to attract funding, you should plan, deliver and oversee remote learning and ensure that the study programme has been developed and are overseeing. This could include lessons delivered online through live streaming or pre-recorded.

Remote learning could also include other activities that support the overall study such as coring responsibilities or not having access to a device or connectivity, or being able to participate in lessons because of other caring responsibilities or normal working pattern. You can also include other activities that are designed to provide you support and supervise time shifted delivery appropriately.

To currently the minimum hours for 16 to 19 study programmes, you should aim to planned hours subject to organising and supervising it. For example, you could include a student who is unable to participate in a live lesson because of a caring position or virtual environment. This could include a student who participates across support and remote respite feedback or their progress as they study.

Where in consultation, you or an independent provider of supported internship consider that it is not appropriate for the student or part of a student's study programme to be delivered in a live or virtual classroom, you should ensure that they meet the principles set out in the 16 to 19 study programmes guidance.

The number of hours a student may study during a week should not be greater than the number of hours they would be expected to attend if they were not affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Ineligible provision

You cannot record and claim student study (homework) as planned hours. For example, it would not be acceptable to provide a student with course materials and expect them to study and complete assignments without any supervision. The funding regulations do not provide for independent study to be included in calculations if this is both reasonable and a small proportion of overall planned hours.

Planned hours timetabled outside your normal working pattern cannot be included in calculations. For example, if a student is expected to study on a Saturday which is also a tutorial of their main 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 been engaged in structured learning
- you have been delivering remote and other teaching that is fully or equal timetabled
- you have been monitoring remote
- students are meeting their planning aims

Make sure you have evidence that the planned hours you record on data returns are timetabled and that students are participating in the planned activities and agreements. For remote delivery, we also expect to see evidence of engagement and participation. This could include:

- records showing that both students and tutors have been logged on when expected to participate in lessons
- marking records or feedback on work completed online
- evidence of the length of the session that supports the planned delivery hours recorded on the system
- communications between students and tutors such as emails, reflections or sessions

If providers are expected to provide material, we expect evidence that recordings have been accessed. Retain any evidence of meaningful participation in the session, such as a log of the chat, or a log of tasks to show a student's understanding of the material covered.

T Levels

Education have been made to providers that will be delivering the first wave of T Levels in 2020 to 2021 based on planned T Level student numbers. We have published the funding rates for 2020 to 2021 and the number of students expected in T Levels to have the planned hours.

Read more about the tolerance and how T Levels will be funded 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 students can attend.

See the industry placements and work guidance for information about delivery 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 eligible.

You should provide support even if students are studying remotely due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

Read further guidance on free meals in further education funding bulletin for 2020.

High-needs funding for students with SEND

The Education Plan has provided additional high needs funding to support the transition from school to college for young people with SEND and for students with high needs whose education plan arrangements they have agreed. Following a review of the 2019 to 2020 academic year, we have published guidance for local authorities should confirm the funding associated with high needs placements, as we agreed with the parents or young people.

Funding claims and reconciliation

Information for education and skills training providers on submitting funding claims to ESFA.

Advanced learner loans

The Student Loans Company (SLC) will continue to make scheduled fee payments to learners in accordance with the agreed funding.

Contact SLC if a student is unsuccessful in change.

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

Currently, approximately 70% of the AEB is delivered to 7 required contracted providers. We have set out the 16 to 19 tuition fund, which will be delivered through the Education Authority (EA) SLA. These authorities are now responsible for the delivery of the 16 to 19 tuition fund and for allocating 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

As part of the Summer Economic update in July 2020, The Chancellor announced that the Government would provide £111 million to fund 16,000 places to help an increase of young people into Traineeships and Kickstart. Alongside the expansion of traineeships, we have also informed them to provide additional funding to support the delivery of high-quality traineeships. These reforms are set out in the new guidance. Providers will be able to deliver any they apply to it traineeships from 1 September 2020.

Supported internships

Where the core aim of a student's supported internship has not been met due to the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19), providers will be able to claim a retention rate interim payment for 2020 to 2021 academic year.

For those requiring additional funding to complete their programme in the 2020 to 2021 academic year, providers can make a claim under the:

- necessary duration of this extension
- number of planned hours

You will need to show the student's one-to-one study programme. We do not expect that students have to be in the workplace for the extension.

The new study programme will be funded through the usual funding rules. Providers will be able to claim for the 16 to 19 study programme, as set out in the allocations under the 16 to 19 funding factsheets for the academic year 2019 to 2020.

Access to Work and supported internships

Supported interns can access Access to Work payment for work-related activities where:

- a job coach leads the activity
- the activities develop employability skills
- the activities are part of the intern's agreed work placements due to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Let students know they can claim Access to Work for activities that are delivered by a job coach, and provide a job coach. Access to Work is not available to support academic learning activities 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)

You must continue to record your school census and ILR data. The ESFA will continue to monitor the data and will use it to inform funding allocations in the coming way.

Record these supported internship students in the ILR or school census as appropriate, using the relevant study programme. The ESFA will use the data to inform funding for the academic year 2020 to 2021. We will continue to monitor the continuing year with start and planned end dates in the students, post 2020 to 2021 academic year. We will use the data to inform funding for the academic year 2020 to 2021 academic year. We will use the data to inform funding for the minimum qualifying period to count as a funded student.

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

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

boundary of academic years 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021. Do not use it for any other students or academic years.

High needs funding

Discuss any requirement for high needs funding with your local authority. Students who have high needs will occupy places funded at £10,000 per place (£10,000 per place in special schools) in the normal way. See the high needs operational guide for funding for students occupying unfunded places.

Local authorities should follow the established ESFA process if students need to remain on roll to complete their supported internship in the new academic year.

Examinations and assessments

Exams and assessments for general, vocational and technical qualifications will take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

Ofqual has already published proposed changes to the assessment of GCSEs, AS and A Levels in 2021 and has confirmed the arrangements for vocational and technical qualifications and other general qualifications following its consultation on the assessment and awarding of these qualifications. Ofqual has extended the extraordinary regulatory framework for vocational and technical and other general qualifications so we can expect some adaptions to assessments to continue into 2020 to 2021.

It is expected that, for the majority of vocational and technical qualifications that are taken alongside or instead of GCSEs, AS and A levels, awarding organisations will look to align timetables with 2021 exams.

Qualification achievement rates

AS exams that were due to take place in schools and colleges in England in summer 2020 were cancelled. We will not publish any school or college level educational performance data based on tests, assessments or exams for 2020. This includes the 2019 to 2020 qualification achievement rates.

See guidance on school and college performance measures and qualification achievement rates 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.

Audit

Prior to the Prime Minister's announcement of the 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 restarted 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).

Annex A: Health and safety risk assessment

Coronavirus (COVID-19) specific

Everyone needs to assess and manage the risks from coronavirus (COVID-19). This means you are required by law to think about the risks to the staff and students face and do everything reasonably practicable to minimise them, recognising you cannot completely eliminate the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19). You must therefore make sure that a risk assessment has been undertaken to identify the measures needed to reduce the risks from coronavirus (COVID-19) so far as is reasonably practicable. General information on how to make a workplace COVID-secure, including how to approach a coronavirus (COVID-19) risk assessment, is provided by the HSE guidance on making your workplace COVID-secure during the coronavirus pandemic.

You should undertake a coronavirus (COVID-19) risk assessment by considering the measures in this guidance to inform your decisions and control measures. A risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks in the workplace, and the role of others in supporting that. The risk assessment will help you decide whether you have done everything you need to.

Employers have a legal duty to consult their employees on health and safety in good time. It also makes good sense to involve students and parents (where applicable) in discussions around health and safety decisions to help them understand the reasons for the measures being put in place. You do this by listening and talking to them about how you will manage risks from coronavirus (COVID-19) and make the settings COVID-secure. The people who do the work are often the best people to understand the risks in the workplace and will have a view on how to work safely. Involving them in making decisions shows that you take their health and safety seriously.

Sharing your risk assessment

You should share the results of risk assessments with your workforce, ensuring this is accessible. You should consider publishing on your website to provide transparency (HSE would expect all employers with over 50 staff to do so).

Monitoring and review of risk controls

It is important that you know how effective your risk controls are. You should monitor and review the preventive and protective measures regularly, to ensure the measures are working, and take action to address any shortfalls.

Roles and responsibilities

All employers are required by law to protect their employees, and others, from harm. Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the minimum employers must do is:

- identify what could cause injury or illness in the organisation (hazards)
- decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how seriously (the risk)
- take action to eliminate the hazard, or if this is not possible, control the risk

Given the employer landscape in schools and FE is varied, we have set out here what the existing Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools guidance states about the roles and responsibilities for health and safety. The employer is accountable for the health and safety of staff and students.

The principal, or risk management owner, is responsible for ensuring that risks are managed effectively. This includes health and safety matters.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) provides more information on the role of headteachers and employers which can be applied to FE settings in the guidance The role of school leaders - who does what. There is also a simple guide to who the employer is in each type of setting in its FAQs section, under 'Who is accountable for health and safety within a school?'.

References to actions by employers in this guidance may in practice be carried out by FE principals and management teams but the employer will need to assure themselves that they have been carried out, as they retain the accountability for health and safety. If not already done, employers should ensure that a coronavirus (COVID-19) risk assessment for their setting is undertaken as soon as possible.

Wider guidance on the risk assessment process

Health and safety risk assessments identify measures to control risks during education and childcare setting activities. Health and safety law requires the FE employer to assess risks and put in place measures to reduce the risks so far as is reasonably practicable. The law also requires employers to record details of risk assessments, the measures taken to reduce these risks and expected outcomes. You need to record significant findings of the assessment by identifying:

- the hazards
- how people might be harmed by them
- what they have in place to control risk

Records of the assessment should be simple and focused on controls. Outcomes should explain to others what they are required to do and help staff with planning and monitoring.

Risk assessments consider what measures you need to protect the health and safety of all:

- staff
- students
- visitors
- contractors

You need to think about the risks that may arise in the course of the day. This could include anything related to the premises or delivery of its curriculum or activities, whether on-site or in relation to activities off-site.

Consulting employees (general)

It is a legal requirement that employers must consult with the health and safety representative selected by a recognised trade union or, if there isn't one, a representative chosen by staff. As an employer, you cannot decide who the representative will be.

At its most effective, full involvement of staff creates a culture where relationships between employers and staff are based on collaboration, trust and joint problem solving. As is normal practice, staff should be involved in assessing workplace risks and the development and review of workplace health and safety policies in partnership with the employer. Consultation does not remove the employer's right to manage. They will still make the final decision but talking to employees is an important part of successfully managing health and safety.

Resolving issues and raising concerns

Employers and staff should always come together to resolve issues. Any concerns in respect of the controls should be raised initially with line management and trade union representatives and employers should recognise those concerns and give them proper consideration. If that does not resolve the issues, the concern can be raised with HSE. Where HSE identify employers who are not taking action to comply with the relevant public health legislation and guidance to control public health risks, they will consider taking a range of actions to improve control of workplace risks. The actions HSE can take include the provision of specific advice to employers through to issuing enforcement notices to help secure improvements.

Approach to risk estimation and management

Some types of control are more effective at reducing risks than others. Risk reduction measures should be assessed in order of priority as set out below; you should not simply adopt the easiest control measure to implement. Controls should be practical to be implemented and, ideally, should be able to be maintained easily over time. It is critical to remember that it will only rarely be feasible to eliminate individual risks completely.

The combination of controls introduced should aim to reduce the risk to as low as reasonably practicable and prioritise cultural, environmental interventions over individual level ones. This does not just mean considering risks of transmission, but also balancing these against risks to wider health and wellbeing and to education. You have the flexibility to respond to risks in a way that suits your circumstances, whilst complying with your duties under health and safety legislation. You should work through the following steps to address your risks, considering for each risk whether there are measures in each step you can adopt before moving onto the next step:

1. Elimination: stop an activity that is not considered essential if there are risks attached.
2. Substitution: replace the activity with another that reduces the risk. Care is required to avoid introducing new hazards due to the substitution.
3. Engineering controls: design measures that help control or mitigate risk.
4. Administrative controls: identify and implement the procedures to improve safety (for example, markings on the floor, signage).
5. Having gone through this process, PPE should be used in circumstances where the guidance says it is required.

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