



Correspondence

ESFA Update local authorities: 16 December 2020

Updated 17 December 2020

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1. Latest information on coronavirus (COVID-19)

The Department for Education has published guidance about [COVID-19 in educational settings for staff, parents and carers, pupils and students on GOV.UK](#).

Please check [GOV.UK](#) regularly for updates.

2. Information: staggered rollout of coronavirus testing for secondary schools and colleges

The government has today (17 December) confirmed that all secondary schools and colleges in England will be able to test more of their staff and students in a round of free coronavirus testing from the first week of January.

This will help to deliver the national priority to keep education open for all and help fight the spread of the virus, while keeping schools and colleges safe. Building on the incredible work schools and colleges have done to be Covid-secure, the round of testing will help to reassure students, parents and teachers about returning to school and college.

[Read more on GOV.UK](#).

3. Action: how to claim exceptional learning support (ELS) for 2020 to 2021

We have published the [guidance and cost form for exceptional learning support for the 2020 to 2021 funding year](#).

Providers and employers must complete the estimated cost of exceptional learning support at the beginning of a learner’s programme and submit the completed cost form for ESFA learners only, via the [ESFA online enquiry form](#).

We are responsible for paying exceptional learning support for:

- learners aged 19 and over with an identified learning difficulty and/or disability (LDD) without an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- all age apprentices that have an identified LDD and are with or without an EHC plan
- advanced loans-funded learners with an identified LDD without an EHC plan as part of the Advanced Learner Loans bursary fund

Further information on ELS can be found in the [adult education budget funding rules 2020 to 2021](#) and [advanced learner loans funding rules 2020 to 2021](#).

If you have any questions after reading our guidance please contact us via the [ESFA online enquiry form](#) ensuring that you add “20-21 Exceptional Learning Support” in the subject title. You will need to select Contract (19+) as the “Query Type” to enable your query to be transferred to the correct team.

Please contact your mayoral combined authority (MCA’s) or the Greater London Authority (GLA) for support funding for learners funded through devolved AEB arrangements.

4. Information: risk protection arrangement – 2021 to 2022 price confirmation

The cost of the [risk protection arrangement \(RPA\)](#) is reviewed annually to ensure breadth of cover and value for money are balanced. The department can confirm that RPA deduction from the general annual grant (GAG) will be £19 per pupil from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

While we acknowledge this is a small increase, your school will continue to benefit from the wide range of RPA cover. You don’t need to do anything as your membership will renew automatically on 1 April 2021 at the 2021 to 2022 price of £19 per pupil.

The RPA continues to offer excellent value for money and all schools classified as public sector schools can join – [sign up and join today](#).

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact [RPA.StakeHolderRelations@education.gov.uk](#).

5. Information: procurement opportunity launching for adult education budget (AEB) contracts for services

Existing ESFA funded AEB contracts for services will come to an end on 31 July 2021 and will not be extended.

As a result, a competitive procurement exercise under the [Public Contract Regulations 2015](#) for these contracts will open in early 2021. The contracts will start on 1 August 2021 and run for the 2021 to 2022 academic year. Please view the [prior information notice](#) for more information.

6. Information: update on the level of funding for the Level 3 adult offer

Following the announcement of the Level 3 adult offer last week, we can now confirm the funding rates available to support providers to scale-up the level 3 adult offer ahead of April 2021.

These uplift rates will apply to 19-23 and 24+ learners studying for qualifications on the level 3 entitlement extension list:

- a £600 per-qualification uplift for substantial level 3 qualifications above 360 guided learning hours
- a £150 per-qualification uplift for less substantial qualifications below 360 guided learning hours

6.1 Level 3 adult offer

From April 2021, any adult aged 24 and over who wants to achieve their first full level 3 qualification, which is equivalent to a technical certificate or diploma, or 2 full A levels, will be able to access almost 400 fully funded courses. You can find more information on the offer and the courses available on the [National Skills Fund GOV.UK page](#).

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Yes

No

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Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance and support	Check the new rules for January 2021	
Services and information	Departments and policy	
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		Transparency and freedom of information releases