

Correspondence

ESFA Update further education: 27 January 2021

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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](#).

There is also [guidance on the apprenticeship service about COVID-19](#).

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

2. Action: new subcontractor declaration window open – including nil returns

Our mandatory collection of subcontractor declarations is now open. In line with the funding rules, this is a mandatory collection for organisations delivering ESFA funded post 16 education and training programmes, including all apprenticeships and traineeships, and those FE institutions delivering 16 to 19 provision and any other adult provision.

All providers must declare their subcontracting arrangements for the period 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021 through the [Manage your education and skills funding service \(MYESF\)](#).

Please note if you do not subcontract but receive direct funding from ESFA, you are still required to make a nil return.

The deadline for submitting the declaration is Wednesday 17 February 2021 by 5pm.

You will need one of the following MYESF roles to complete and submit a declaration:

- contract authoriser
- contract manager
- data returns and claims authoriser

You can check the [user roles and permissions in MYESF](#).

If you have any questions, please submit an [ESFA online enquiry form](#).

3. Reminder: mid-year funding claims for 2020 to 2021

The mid-year funding claim window will open at 9am on Monday 8 February 2021. We understand that this is a difficult time for everyone, and time and resources are under strain. However, we will still require you to submit an accurate mid-year claim so we have visibility of the challenges you are facing, which will inform the design of the year end reconciliation process.

Please submit your mid-year funding claim by 5pm on Friday 19 February 2021. This is slightly later than we originally published. The claim form will be available on [Submit Learner Data](#).

You will need to submit a claim if you receive funds through:

- grant funded – ESFA adult education budget (AEB) (adult skills, community learning, 19 to 24 traineeships and COVID-19 skills offer)
- learner support for ESFA AEB procured (adult skills and 19 to 24 traineeships) – paid-on-profile
- grant funded - Advanced Learner Loans Bursary (ALLB)

Once you have submitted your claim you will also be able to view it on the [Manage your education and skills funding](#).

If you have any queries about this, please contact your Territorial Manager.

4. Reminder: 16 to 19 tuition fund statement

As a condition of receiving payment from the 16 to 19 tuition fund, providers were required to:

- produce a concise statement explaining how they will use this funding in line with our guidance to prioritise support for disadvantaged students
- publish the statement on their website in the autumn term

We will be conducting spot checks from Monday 8 February 2021 to confirm statements have been published.

5. Information: Further Education Capital Transformation fund now open

The Further Education (FE) Capital Transformation Fund was launched on Thursday, 21 January meaning that FE colleges and designated institutions can now bid for capital funding to improve the condition of their estate and buildings. This fund is part of the commitment, announced in the 2020 Budget, to upgrade FE colleges and designated institutions across England by investing £1.5 billion of new capital by 2026. £200m has already been allocated to FE colleges and designated institutions through the [Further Education Capital Allocations](#).

This is a significant opportunity for FE colleges and designated institutions to secure vital condition improvement investment in buildings and facilities that will help them to:

- support the delivery of high quality vocational and technical education training;
- support the aims set out in the government's White Paper [Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth](#)

We encourage eligible institutions to bid.

We published [guidance](#), which sets out how colleges and designated institutions should bid for funding and the key criteria against which bids will be assessed. The bidding process consists of two stages:

- **Stage 1** - you should complete an initial application form outlining your estate condition needs and your proposed solution for initial consideration.
- **Stage 2** - if your stage 1 application is approved, then you will be asked to submit more detailed proposals at Stage 2.

All applications for stage 1 must be submitted by 11.59pm on 15 March 2021.

6. Information: updates to key ESFA funding rules and rates guidance

6.1 ESFA AEB funding and performance management rules 2020 to 2021 (version 5) and Advanced Learner Loans funding and performance management rules 2020 to 2021 (version 3)

This week, we will publish version 5 of the [ESFA AEB funding and performance management rules 2020 to 2021](#) and [version 3 of the Advanced Learner Loans funding and performance management rules 2020 to 2021](#).

These rules include details for the National Skills Fund – Level 3 adult offer. This is part of the [Lifetime Skills Guarantee](#) announced by the Prime Minister in September 2020.

The AEB rules also set out the performance management arrangements for traineeships 2020 procurement.

If you have any queries, please use our [online enquiry form](#).

6.2 ESFA AEB funding and performance management rules 2020 to 2021 (version 5) - Level 3 Adult Offer Allocations

We aim to issue revised allocation statements for National Skills Fund: level 3 adult offer to providers by 24 February for the 2020 to 2021 funding year. We will use historic delivery of the qualifications in scope to determine allocations and further details will be made available as part of the allocation statement and accompanying technical guidance.

To note we will be responsible for funding learners resident in non-devolved areas, and a proportion of the funding will be devolved to mayoral combined authorities (MCAs)/greater London authority (GLA) who will be responsible for funding learners resident in their areas. More information will be provided shortly for 2021 to 2022 funding year allocations.

If you have any queries, please use our [online enquiry form](#).

6.3 ESFA funded adult education budget funding rates and formula guide 2020 to 2021

We will shortly publish [version 4 of the adult education budget \(AEB\) funding rates and formula guide for 2020 to 2021](#).

This document sets out how we will fund activity for ESFA funded AEB and 16 to 18 traineeships. In this version, we have described 2 changes to funding for the 2020 to 2021 year:

- funding through the 2020 procurement of traineeship contracts for starts from February 2021.
- funding for the Level 3 Adult Offer for starts from April 2021.

This guide covers 2020 to 2021 and is our current advice for the funding year. We know that providers are working through exceptional circumstances due to COVID-19.

We may publish further updates about the impact of COVID-19 on our guidance as these become clear. We will tell you about any changes in ESFA Update.

If you have any queries after reading our guidance please [contact us](#).

7. Information: update on the Get Help with Technology programme

The Get Help with Technology service is currently being rolled out to further education providers with eligible students, meaning that providers will be able to order devices and to request 4G wireless routers for financially disadvantaged students without broadband at home. Information about the service was provided in the ESFA bulletin on 20 January.

Further education providers are currently being invited to join the service in waves, and we expect that the majority of eligible further education providers will have been invited to join the service before the end of January. **Please note you cannot access the service until you have been invited to do so via an email from the Department for Education.**

Once providers have joined the service and placed an order for devices, they will also be eligible to request 4G wireless routers for financially disadvantaged students who do not have a broadband connection at home. Under the GHWT service devices are being provided based on an estimate of a provider's device needs (based on free meals data and estimates of prior device ownership) however the provision of wireless routers will be based on actual need. This is because within the GHWT service, the need for connectivity has been far lower than the need for devices. In order to make a request for wireless routers for your students you will need to provide information about how you have identified the number of learners requiring connectivity solutions. DFE will be looking for confirmation that you have identified which disadvantaged learners do not have broadband at home through for example, contact with students/parents, surveys etc. In providing evidence of need you should not include any personal information about the students such as their names, addresses or date of birth.

Please note that the free data offered provided by mobile network operators for children in schools (years 3 to 11) does not currently extend to young people aged 16-19 in schools or FE providers, therefore we encourage providers to request wireless routers through the GHWT service for young people aged 16-19 (and those aged 19+ with EHCPs) who cannot afford mobile data and who do not have broadband at home.

We would like to encourage FE providers to **update the number of students in receipt of free meals in the mandatory R06 ILR data return due 4 February**, as this will help to inform the GHWT service.

8. Information: college financial dashboards now live

A new tool has been developed for colleges that allows you to visualise and analyse the financial data you submit to ESFA.

The dashboards provide helpful visuals across a range of areas of college finances. They support colleges to compare their financial performance and forecasts across data returns. We have worked closely with college finance staff on the design and testing of the dashboards.

8.1 Your feedback is important

We're really keen to see the future development of this tool being led by colleges. Following this initial release to all colleges we would welcome feedback on how we can make further improvements to support college finance staff and board members. There is a link within the 'Notes' tab of the tool which can be used to provide feedback.

8.2 How to get access

The tool is available now on [view your education data \(VYED\)](#). You will need an Identity and Access Management System (IDAMS) account to get access to the tool. To get an IDAMS account follow the link above. Once in VYED, you will also need to request the 'View Your Education Data – College Financials' role.

Your setting 'super user' will need to approve requests for those who need access to the dashboards.

9. Information: 16 to 18 in-year growth process

We can confirm that we will be running an in-year growth process for 16 to 18 delivery during February. We will contact the providers who are eligible for funding by the end of February 2021.

The growth process will be purely data driven, so providers must not send business cases as we cannot accept them.

10. Information: find an end-point assessment organisation

[Find an end-point assessment organisation](#) is a new function the apprenticeship service has developed to enable employers and training providers to find end-point assessors that deliver assessments for the standard their apprentice is completing.

The function allows employers and providers to search for the apprenticeship training that needs to be assessed and view all available end-point assessors who can deliver the assessment. If there is more than one assessment organisation for the selected standard, you will be shown a list of all available organisations to choose from.

For any queries, please contact the Apprenticeship Service on 08000 150 600.

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