

Correspondence

ESFA Update academies: 21 April 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.

Please check GOV.UK regularly for updates.

2. Action: submit your school resource management self-assessment tool checklist

Thank you to those trusts that have submitted their school resource management self-assessment tool (SRMSAT) return. The deadline for submission was Thursday 15 April 2021, if you have not yet submitted a return to ESFA, please ensure that this is completed without further delay.

The return must be completed by all academy trusts with at least one open academy on 31 December 2020.

Please visit our [school resource management self-assessment tool](#) webpage where you will be able view the guidance along with the link to the online form.

3. Information: academy trust financial returns for 2021 to 2022

For the academic year 2021 to 2022, the dates for the financial returns are as follows:

Form	Go live date	Submission deadline
Land and buildings collection tool (LBCT)	5 October 2021	9 November 2021
Financial statements (FS)	N/A	31 December 2021
Accounts return (AR)	4 November 2021	25 January 2022
Budget forecast return outturn (BFRO)	12 April 2022	17 May 2022
Budget forecast return 3-year (BFR3Y)	21 June 2022	26 July 2022

The table above reflects the reinstatement of the BFRO for 2022. This return has been suspended for the previous two years, by dispensation, as a result of the pandemic.

4. Information: updated view my financial insights (VMFI) tool is now live

We have updated the view my financial insights (VMFI) tool. The tool provides users with rapid insights into the financial position and performance of their trust. It provides an automated and tailored assessment of the potential areas for improved resource management, linked to relevant guidance and resources.

You can find more VMFI [information and guidance online](#), and can [log into the tool now](#).

New features include:

- data refreshed to include the latest accounts return submission data for 2019 to 2020
 - historic data to allow you to compare data from 2018 to 2019 and 2019 to 2020
 - access for additional users, such as governors/trustees and school resource management advisors (SRMAs)
 - rollout of access to the local authority and maintained sector with the inclusion of consistent financial reporting (CFR) data
 - a school selector where you can pick your school and choose to compare your data against the academy sector or both academy and maintained sectors. Your selection will be remembered for when you next log in
 - insights into the top cost categories to investigate for each school
 - summary of finances download – updated with 2019 to 2020 data
- Please click on your preferred date below to register for a training webinar.

- [Thursday 22 April - 3pm to 4pm](#)
- [Wednesday 12 May - 3pm to 4pm](#)

5. Reminder: the coronavirus (COVID-19) free school meals additional costs online form for schools and colleges is live

The [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) free school meals additional costs online form](#) went live on 7 April 2021.

You can claim eligible costs related to free school meals and free meal additional costs during the period 4 January up to the start of the Easter holidays (as applicable).

The deadline to submit your claim is 23:59 on 4 May 2021.

We have published [guidance to help you complete the form](#).

6. Information: coronavirus (COVID-19) summer schools programme funding

As part of the wider recovery package to support children in catching up on missed face to face learning and development and providing an opportunity to support their mental health and wellbeing, we are providing £200m to enable as many secondary schools as possible to deliver face-to-face summer schools this year.

Schools are free to identify the pupils who would most benefit from summer school. We recommend a focus on incoming year 7 pupils, giving those pupils an opportunity to build a community with their new classmates and teachers and familiarise themselves with their new school environment.

Funding is calculated based on 50% of a school's year 7 cohort being offered a place on a two-week programme, or 100% of the cohort being offered a week-long programme and equates to £597 per two-week place (£1,791 for pupils in special schools or units and alternative provision).

We have published the coronavirus (COVID-19) summer schools programme funding allocations, which show the available funding for each eligible secondary school in England, based on their numbers of year 7 pupils.

We will shortly ask secondary schools to complete a sign-up form to indicate they intend to take part. We will then ask schools to confirm their plans in June.

Further information is available in our [summer schools guidance](#).

If you have questions, please contact us at: learning.recovery@education.gov.uk.

7. Information: Schools and Academies Show 27 to 30 April

You are invited to join us at the second online Schools and Academies Show from 27 to 30 April 2021.

We've worked with the organisers to put together a [programme of speakers and workshops](#) for this virtual event.

You can connect with staff from ESFA and DfE to:

- ask questions via live-chat functionality
- view sessions and roundtables hosted by ESFA and DfE
- set up 1-2-1 private video meetings with members of the teams

[Register now](#) to create your own personal agenda.

8. Action: feedback on the updated Academies Accounts Direction

We are seeking feedback on the updated [Academies Accounts Direction](#), including the model accounts document, from academy trusts and auditors.

Please take a few minutes to complete the [short survey](#), which will help us to ensure that the Academies Accounts Direction continues to meet your needs.

9. Action: £75 million of grant funding available to take that next step to a low carbon heating future

Phase 2 of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme opened on 7 April 2021 with a strong focus on heat decarbonisation to deliver greater carbon emission reductions. Applications are to be submitted through the [Salix Finance website](#).

To be eligible for the scheme, two key criteria must be met in addition to the [existing Phase 2 criteria](#):

- applicants must be using a fossil-fuelled heating system; and
- the heating system in question must be coming to the end of its useful life.

DfEs approved [Fusion21 Lot10 education specific framework](#) offers a range of heating systems and renewable technology services from consultancy to design and can provide support to the application stage.

The organisations eligible to apply are the same as for Phase 1 PSDS. These include:

- maintained schools within the state education system, including academies, multi-academy trusts and free schools
- nursery schools maintained by a local authority

£75m of grant funding is available and all projects that receive funding in Phase 2 PSDS must be fully installed and therefore completed before 31 March 2022.

See GOV.UK for more information about the [Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme](#).

10. Action: consultation on business rates

DfE has launched a [public consultation](#) on a proposal to centralise the payment of national non-domestic rates (NNDR), more commonly known as business rates, for state-funded schools for 5 to 16 year olds. DfE is seeking views on the payment of schools' business rates directly to billing authorities on behalf of schools and a single reconciliation payment to billing authorities to allow for adjustments before the end of the financial year. We welcome views from state-funded schools, local authorities, billing authorities and any other stakeholders.

The consultation closes on 5 May 2021, please do pass the link on to interested parties.

11. Action: RPA Members: Crime Resilience Programme Overview Webinars

Willis Towers Watson is providing risk management support for all RPA members through audit, guidance and advice.

As part of the risk management support RPA members are invited to a webinar covering effective management of the risk of criminal activity to premises, assets and personnel and the support that is available to its members.

11.1 Who should attend?

This workshop will be useful for those with:

- responsibilities for the management of premises and the safeguarding of people
- day-to-day management of facilities and assets, which could include Facilities and Business Managers
- risk management responsibilities.

11.2 Webinar dates: (click on the link to register)

- [6 May 2021 – 10:00 to midday](#)
- [20 May 2021 – 10:00 to midday](#)

11.3 Benefits of attending

- Reducing the risk of civil claims and reputational damage
- Protecting the school's premises and assets
- Managing the risk of business interruption as a result of criminal activity
- Reducing the risk of any incidents in relation to people on site

12. Information: future development of the T Level Transition Programme

It has been fantastic to see the launch of the first T Level Transition Programmes in 32 providers across the country. Over the next 9 months, we will be determining what the final national programme will look like, drawing on this first year of delivery, wider evidence on good practice and working with education specialists, providers, employers and sector stakeholders.

The programme will retain the flexibility to be able to support each student individually and enable them to progress on to a T Level, whilst introducing a degree of consistency to ensure all students are consistently prepared regardless of where they are studying.

[Further details on our approach to developing the programme](#), for September 2022 implementation, are on GOV.UK.

13. Information: replacement service for TP Online barred list status checks

From 01 April the Teaching Regulation Agency is offering an additional function within its existing free [Employer Access facility](#) that allows schools, in specific circumstances, to conduct standalone Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) barred list status checks. This will replace the current TP Online service.

This search should only be used on newly appointed staff who are engaging in regulated activity, pending the receipt of an Enhanced Certificate with Barred List information from the DBS or where an individual has worked in a post in a school or college that brought them into regular contact with children or young persons which ended not more than three months prior to that person's appointment to the organisation.

For full details of the checks that must be carried out on school and college staff, please refer to Part three of the DfE's statutory guidance '[Keeping children safe in education'](#) (KCSIE).

13.1 Accessing the new service

As a school you should have access to Teacher Services – Employer Access – Schools via DfE Sign-In (DSI). If you are authorised to use the service you will see the new search functionality upon logging in to Teacher Services – Employer Access – Schools.

Guidance on how to perform a search, and next steps if you identify a possible match, are available within guidance documents at the Teacher Services – Employer Access – Schools need help.

If you need help using DSI, or you need to register for a DSI account, please [access their help page](#).

This service is not available to supply/recruitment agencies or other organisations that do not meet the requirements in the relevant legislation.

We appreciate that some schools and colleges may use third party agencies e.g. HR services and recruitment agencies to undertake pre-appointment checks as set out in Part three of KCSIE. This arrangement can still happen, but because these third parties will no longer have access to the standalone barred list service as they do not fall within the legal requirement, they will need to apply to the DBS for an Enhanced Certificate with Barred List information to determine whether a person is barred, on your behalf.

Please contact: TPonline.REPLACEMENT@education.gov.uk if you think you should have access to this service.

Please contact: Employer.Access@education.gov.uk if you have any further questions about accessing this service.

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