



Basic & Workplace Skills Bulletin

Issue 379

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Funding for community-based English language learning

The Communities & Local Government Secretary, Robert Jenrick, has announced a £5.1 million fund to provide classes to those with little or no English in 30 areas across England. The lessons will take place in safe spaces such as community centres and places of worship.

The minister said that the new programme would offer English language sessions to those with little or no written or spoken English. He pointed out that the 30 successful local authorities had all designed programmes that would best meet the needs of residents with little or no English language skills, who may feel disconnected, and the aim of the programme would be to help them to fulfil their potential and improve their connections within their local communities.

Mr Jenrick stressed that the tailored language lessons would be delivered in familiar and accessible community buildings, in a socially distant way, or online, via apps. He said that digital laptop libraries would be used and there would be one to one learner support. The minister pointed out that community-based tuition had been proven to be a highly effective means of engaging people who were in greatest need of support and who may not have previously taken steps to learn English. He added that the most common difficulties were travel costs, lack of childcare, illiteracy in their first language, digital exclusion or a reluctance or lack of confidence to make the first steps towards learning English.

The programmes will focus on connecting learners to the places, spaces and people in their local area, by helping them in everyday situations such as shopping in the high street, visiting the doctor or attending a parents' evening. The fund will provide opportunities for English language practice, as well as social mixing through shared interests and activities both face to face and online.

“Community-based tuition had been proven to be a highly effective means of engaging people who were in greatest need of support and who may not have previously taken steps to learn English.”

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Government commits to build stronger relationships with colleges

Proposals to strengthen relationships with colleges and promote better planning to make sure that communities got the skills they needed, have been published by the Department for Education. The new “strategic vision” for the college sector followed Dame Mary Ney’s *Independent Review*, which had been initiated after Hadlow and West Kent & Ashford Colleges had been placed in education administration in 2019.

The review, which had been completed in October and was published last week, looked at how the Government monitored colleges’ finances and financial management, including examining the work of the Education and Skills Funding Agency and the Further Education Commissioner’s team. Following the report’s recommendations, the Government responded by setting out a number of actions including:

- Strengthened alignment between the Further Education Commissioner and ESFA.
- A regular strategic dialogue led by the ESFA and Further Education Commissioner’s team with all college boards on priorities, starting from September.
- New whistle-blowing requirements for colleges, including the publication of policies on college websites.
- A review of governance guidance to improve transparency.
- A new College Collaboration Fund round.

“Dame Mary Ney, author of the review, said that the overarching finding from her review had been the need to promote the strategic role of the sector and nurture and support all colleges on an individual basis to reduce the risk of financial problems recurring.”

Further changes will be announced as part of the FE White Paper after the summer. Gillian Keegan, Apprenticeships and Skills Minister, said now more than ever, it would be vital for colleges to ensure that students gained the skills they needed to progress and meet the needs of businesses and their local communities. The minister welcomed the independent review by Dame Mary Ney and her call for a clear vision for the sector.

She said that her Department had begun to make the changes that would address many of the recommendations in the report, including strengthening oversight of the financial health of the sector and increasing the alignment between the Education and Skills Funding Agency and the FE Commissioner.

Dame Mary Ney, author of the review, said that the overarching finding from her review had been the need to promote the strategic role of the sector and nurture and support all colleges on an individual basis to reduce the risk of financial problems recurring. She added that she had been encouraged that the recommendations from the review were being taken forward by the Department, as part of the

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development of an ambitious strategy for the sector.

The publication of the review, and the Government's response, followed the Education Secretary's FE speech where he had pledged to publish a White Paper that would set out the Government's plans to build a world-class, "German-style" further education system in Britain, which would aim toward high-quality qualifications based on employer-led standards.

Responding to Dame Mary Ney's review of financial oversight arrangements for further education and sixth form colleges, Association of Colleges Deputy Chief Executive, Julian Gravatt, said it was "helpful" that the DfE had finally published Dame Mary Ney's review on the financial oversight of colleges.

He argued that while Dame Mary had concluded her work in autumn 2019 at a time when many colleges had been on an improving trajectory, she had described a system which had been complex, backward-looking and not really focused on the key tasks. Mr Gravatt added that the COVID-19 crisis had stopped the financial improvement in its tracks, caused deficits in 2019-20 and opened up large financial problems for colleges in 2020-1.

He said that while the Government and colleges should take the review's recommendations seriously and work out which of them would still make sense nine months on, the AoC did not agree with the suggestion that Ofsted should join the long line of regulators assessing college financial health, but it did agree that the existing arrangements required improvement.

Mr Gravatt welcomed the Skills minister's statement that there would be an FE white paper, as it would be an opportunity to tackle some long-standing issues and put colleges on a firmer footing. He stressed that greater strategic relationships with colleges was needed across the wider education system along with businesses and local communities. Mr Gravatt said that as supporting strong governance and outstanding leaders was the backbone of a thriving college, it had been good to see that the ETF leadership programme had been given £4.5m for the current financial year to carry on the instrumental work. He added that it would also be sensible for the DfE to remind colleges to publish their whistleblowing policies.

Apprenticeship assessment flexibilities to remain into 2021

The special measures that had allowed thousands of people to complete their apprenticeships through the COVID-19 lockdown will be retained into the new year. The Institute's for Apprenticeships and technical Education's Chief Executive, Jennifer Coupland, had made the commitment to continuing flexibilities for the delivery of end point assessments until at least the start of 2021, in a series of webinars with the sector.

The flexibilities had been rolled out for more than 100 apprenticeships to ensure that learners were still able to complete their studies. In most cases they had allowed for high-quality remote rather than face-to-face assessment. But as workplaces were starting to reopen, the Institute wanted to reassure the sector that there would be no imminent plans to drop the temporary measures.

Ms Coupland said that the assessment flexibilities would continue as people gradually returned to work-places and face-to-face learning and assessment became more viable. She pointed out that the Institute would start looking from September at where to go next with the flexibilities, but she confirmed that the Institute was not planning to make any changes before the new year to give everyone a degree of stability.

90% of colleges warn that bursary funds would not meet students' needs

The Association of Colleges has released a follow up survey to the one it had published in early May on the profound impact of COVID-19 on colleges, staff and students. The survey revealed that in many colleges all or most students under 19 had continued their learning remotely in the summer term and over half of planned learning hours had been delivered remotely.

Other Key findings included:

- Most of the colleges had report that teaching staff had been confident in delivering remote learning.
- High-quality digital resources had mostly been available for Maths, Computing and IT, Business and Health and Social Care.
- The vast majority of colleges had plans to enrol students online and would be offering online college induction in September.
- Many colleges had seen evidence of increased student hardship and they had warned that their bursary / hardship funds had been under more pressure as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as an average of an additional £300,000 had been required per college.
- Over half of colleges had reported that their existing and additional bursary funding from DfE had not enabled them to purchase laptops and/or connectivity to support all their disadvantaged learners.
- Three out of four colleges said that they would need additional resources to support the provision of free college meal vouchers to current eligible students over the summer.
- Four out of five colleges anticipated major transport difficulties in September, when they re-opened.
- The vast majority of colleges had experienced additional demand for mental health and wellbeing services for students during the COVID-19 pandemic and they had put additional mental health and wellbeing support in place for their students.
- Just under half of colleges were planning to make redundancies by the end of the autumn term 2020 and a fifth would have made redundancies by September 2020.

New quality marks for higher technical qualifications

Higher technical qualifications will receive a new quality mark from the Institute for Apprenticeships and technical Education from September 2022, as part of government reforms. The mark will aim to help set out qualifications that would fit in with the knowledge, skills and behaviours that employers needed. The move is part of wider government changes to higher technical education at Level 4 and 5 in England, to increase take-up.

In England, currently only 1 in 10 people have a level 4 or 5 as their highest qualification. The Institute said it was pleased to be playing a central part in the reforms and as with its existing processes for apprenticeships and T-Levels, employers would be at the heart of decision-making.

In the first year, the focus will be exclusively on digital qualifications, leading to occupations like network engineer, cyber-security technologist and software developer. Qualifications will be compared to the new digital standards at level 4 and 5 which had been subject to the Institute's recent route review of quality, which will be available shortly on its website. During the first wave of approval on digital qualifications, the Institute will work collaboratively with awarding bodies and its partners to learn lessons for future waves.

The first qualifications that will be available from September 2022, will provide opportunities for students starting the first digital T- Level. Attention will then turn to qualifications on the Construction and Health and Science routes which will be available from 2023. The Institute will provide full details of the approval process to interested awarding organisations and universities when the window for submission of qualifications opens in September.

City and Guilds

The long-established skills organisation City & Guilds welcomed the Government's focus on higher level technical education as a route into meaningful employment, or a way of reskilling into new careers as announced this morning. However, it had some doubts about the direction that the Government was going in. In its recent report, *Recovery and Resilience*, it had called for the £2.5bn as yet unspent National Skills Fund (NSF) to be urgently deployed to support adults with level 3 and above qualifications reskilling into new industries post-COVID-19.

Kirstie Donnelly, CEO City & Guilds Group, said: "However, what employers and learners need now is a coherent technical education system that develops the skills most needed to help plug post-Brexit skills gaps and reduce unemployment as we re-shape our economy after COVID. We cannot afford to see a policy direction that leads to a highly centralised system, at a time when the real urgency is agility, speed and responsiveness aligned to real time local labour market intelligence and demand. We'd like to see unused skills funding made broad in its criteria to provide quick access to any reskilling or upskilling programme that supports employment and skills needs now. This should not just ladder into long, formal higher level qualifications or traditional classroom-based learning, but should be used to help support new ways of acquiring higher level skills, including online, bitesize courses.

"While we agree about the vital importance of careers advice in helping people to understand the value of technical education, this improved advice should focus less on what qualifications are available and more on the skills most needed to find meaningful work. We must focus on development opportunities across different industries at local and devolved regions and then have the dexterity and flexibility built into the system to fund these as they are required. If we are to create a technical education system that really is world class and is chosen by learners, what we need now is not consultations and complex systems but flexibility and agility to help as many people as possible back into work now and raise skills levels for all."

Government advice on COVID-19

This section lists all communications from government about COVID-19 issued from last Monday to yesterday. Almost all communications from the UK government apply only to England. The list includes all advice relevant to adult basic skills, further education and training from the UK Government and its agencies, like SAGE, and from the devolved institutions.

This data is extracted from the full list of government advice to or about children, young people and educational settings published in this week's issue of *EPM Weekly COVID-19 Announcements*, which is part of the weekly edition of *Education Parliamentary Monitor*.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) : Reducing burdens on educational and care settings

Date: Friday 17 July 2020

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: England

Details: List of data collections, services or requests which will be cancelled, paused or will continue.

Schools and local authorities should continue to check this document which will be updated as soon as further decisions are made. This is an update of previously published guidance.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-reducing-burdens-on-educational-and-care-settings?utm_source=b8b0af0b-206f-4364-b963-32325a3e5783&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

COVID-19 Education Recovery Group Minutes: 01 July 2020

Date: Friday 17 July 2020

Source: Scottish Government

Document type: Minutes

Geographical coverage: Scotland

Details: Minutes and papers from 1 July 2020 meeting of the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-19-education-recovery-group-minutes-1-july-2020/>

COVID-19 Education Recovery Group Minutes: 25 June 2020

Date: Friday 17 July 2020

Source: Scottish Government

Document type: Minutes

Geographical coverage: Scotland

Details: Minutes and papers from 25 June 2020 meeting of the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-19-education-recovery-group-minutes-25-june-2020/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on College, University and Purpose Built Student Accommodation

Date: Friday 17 July 2020

Source: Scottish Government Advanced Learning and Science Directorate

Document type: Advice and guidance

Geographical coverage: Scotland

Details: Guidance on safe re-opening during the coronavirus pandemic for college, university and purpose built student accommodation (PBSA). This guidance is for university and college halls of residence and Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA), hereafter 'providers'. It comes into effect on 22 July 2020 and will be updated and renewed as circumstances change. It sets out the current advice and guidance for

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the safe restart of university and college halls of residence and PBSA, in helping to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19. It is one of a set of Scottish Government sectoral guidance on Safer Workplaces which are applicable as we progress through the phases described in *Coronavirus (COVID-19): Scotland's route map through and out of the crisis* (21 May 2020), and any subsequent updates. The route map provides an indication of the order in which the Scottish Government will carefully and gradually seek to lift restrictions across Scottish society. It states the criteria used to decide movement between phases with a commitment to review and report every three weeks. Phase 1 commenced on 28 May 2020, with the First Minister announcing her intentions on Phase 2 on 18 June 2020, and the indicative dates for the remainder of Phase 2 and early Phase 3 on 24 June 2020.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-college-university-and-purpose-built-student-accommodation/>

COVID-19 Education Recovery Group Minutes: 18 June 2020

Date: Friday 17 July 2020

Source: Scottish Government

Document type: Minutes

Geographical coverage: Scotland

Details: Minutes and papers from 18 June 2020 meeting of the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-19-education-recovery-group-minutes-18-june-2020/>

FE Circular 04/20 – FE Grants 2020/21

Date: Friday 17 July 2020

Source: Northern Ireland Executive

Document type: Circular

Geographical coverage: Northern Ireland

Details: This circular provides information and guidance on further education grants (formerly further education awards). It supersedes FE Circular 04/19 and covers the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/fe-circular-0420-fe-grants-202021>

FE Circular 05/20 – Hardship Fund

Date: Friday 17 July 2020

Source: Northern Ireland Executive

Document type: Circular

Geographical coverage: Northern Ireland

Details: This circular sets out terms and conditions for the payment of the Hardship Fund (Discretionary) from 1 August 2020. It supersedes FE Circular 05/19 and covers the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/fe-circular-0520-hardship-fund>

Qualifications in COVID-19 support packages

Date: Thursday 16 July 2020

Source: Education and Skills Funding Agency

Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: England

Details: The qualifications Education and Skills Funding Agency will fund to support economic recovery following the COVID-19 outbreak. The Chancellor has agreed a package of measures to boost skills and support the labour market to recover from the COVID-19 outbreak. The package will:

- support young people at added risk of unemployment and help them access training to boost their employability
- sit alongside the guidance already issued for further education colleges

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On 8 July 2020, the Chancellor announced exceptional funding as part of the wider COVID-19 skills recovery response. We are prioritising getting young people into work, an apprentice or other work-based training. Where these are not available, this is an offer of additional one-year courses in high value subjects to prevent students aged 18 and 19 from becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training).

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualifications-in-covid-19-support-packages?utm_source=94e8fb88-2c74-404e-be36-b10fe4f67594&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Actions for FE Colleges and Providers During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak

Date: Wednesday 15 July 2020

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: England

Details: Guidance for further education (FE) providers on maintaining education and skills training, changes to funding arrangements, data collections and assessment. This advice is for:

- post-16 further education (FE) provider
- FE college
- sixth form college
- other FE provider

The advice explains what you'll need to do during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak to maintain provision. This guidance updates previous advice giving added guidance on supporting vulnerable young people and specific advice for learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to 'What FE colleges and providers will need to do from the start of the 2020 autumn term'.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision?utm_source=70fdc55c-eb20-4dbe-a717-806fdf749a0a&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Providing Apprenticeships During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak

Date: Tuesday 14 July 2020

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: England

Details: This document sets out guidance for apprentices, employers, training providers and assessment organisations in response to the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19). This is a difficult time for apprentices, employers and providers of apprenticeship training, assessment and external assurance. The government is committed to supporting apprentices, and employers continue to build the skills capabilities the country needs now and in the future. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) is responding by taking steps to ensure that, wherever possible, apprentices can continue and complete their apprenticeship, despite any break they need to take as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19), and to support providers during this challenging time. This document sets out guidance for apprentices, employers, training providers and assessment organisations in response to the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19). It outlines the changes that the Education and Skills Funding Agency is making to the apprenticeship programme during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. With the introduction of urgent government measures to reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) and a rapidly developing situation, these guidelines reflect arrangements applied at the current time. This guidance will be kept under active review and updated regularly with further developments.

The support we are providing includes:

- Supporting employers, providers and apprentices to work together to mutually agree where and how this training takes place. This includes in the workplace or assessment centre where a provider is able

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to do so safely and where that workplace or centre meets new 'coronavirus secure' guidelines on ensuring the workplace is safe. It also includes training taking place in educational settings in line with the new guidance on wider opening from 15 June 2020, guidance for further education providers, and guidance on what FE colleges and providers will need to do from the start of the 2020 autumn term.

- Confirming flexibilities to allow furloughed apprentices to continue their training and to take their end-point assessment, and to allow existing furloughed employees to start a new apprenticeship, as long as it does not provide services to or generate revenue for their employer.
- Encouraging training providers to deliver training to apprentices remotely, and via e-learning, as far as is practicable.
- Allowing the modification of end-point assessment arrangements, including remote assessments wherever practicable and possible - this is in order to support employers, providers and end-point assessment organisations (EPAOs) to maintain progress and achievement for apprentices.
- Clarifying that apprentices ready for assessment, but who cannot be assessed due to coronavirus (COVID-19) issues, can have their end-point assessment rescheduled.
- Apprentices whose gateway is delayed can have an extension to the assessment time frame.
- Enabling employers and training providers to report and initiate a break in learning, where the interruption to learning due to coronavirus (COVID-19) is greater than 4 weeks.
- Confirming that, where apprentices are made redundant, it is our ambition to find them alternative employment and continue their apprenticeship as quickly as possible and within 12 weeks.
- Confirming that where apprentices are made redundant and are ready to go through gateway, that providers and EPAOs are able to make the necessary assessment arrangements to support these apprentices.
- Confirming that we are extending the transition period onto the apprenticeship service. Funds available for new starts on non-levy procured contracts can now be used until 31 March 2021. All starts will be through the apprenticeship service from 1 April 2021.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-apprenticeship-programme-response?utm_source=6afcd8180-d3e9-4688-bdb4-085b119b15af&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Guidance on Testing and Contact Tracing in Education Settings

Date: Tuesday 14 July 2020

Source: Welsh Government

Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: Wales

Details: Information on the antigen (swab) and antibody (blood) tests and contact tracing. This guidance is an update to that issued on 3 July.

<https://gov.wales/guidance-testing-and-contact-tracing-education-settings>

Taking Exams During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak

Date: Monday 13 July 2020

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Guidance

Geographical coverage: England

Details: What schools, colleges and students need to know about cancelled GCSEs, AS and A levels and other qualifications in 2020, and the plans for taking future exams. This guidance is an update on previously published advice. It removes some questions relating to outdated information, included a new question with more detail on centre assessment grades, added detail on timings, added detail on the autumn series of exams added new section on 2021 exams arrangements.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2020?utm_source=b51c5880-157a-4ac2-8155-57d2c526ff9e&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Policy papers published last week

Apprenticeship Funding

Author: -

Source: Education and Skills Funding Agency

Document type: Policy paper

Published: Tuesday 14 July, 2020

Reference:

Geographical coverage: England

Description: These five documents show how the government funds apprenticeships in England, including details of funding bands and the apprenticeship levy, dating back to reforms that were introduced in May 2017. Each paper explains the apprenticeship funding policy that applies to apprentices that started after a specific date.

- *Apprenticeship funding in England (from August 2020)* applies to apprentices who started after 1 August 2020.
- *Apprenticeship funding for employers who do not pay the apprenticeship levy (from January 2020)* outlines changes to the way employers who do not pay the levy arrange their apprenticeships.
- *Apprenticeship funding in England (from April 2019)* applies to apprentices who started after 1 April 2019.
- *Apprenticeship funding in England (from August 2018)* applies to apprentices who started after 1 August 2018.
- *Apprenticeship funding in England (from May 2017)* applies to apprentices who started after 1 May 2017 up to 31 July 2018.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-funding>

Statutory Notice to the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education

Author: Gillian Keegan MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary for Apprenticeships and Skills

Source: Department for Education

Document type: Policy paper in the form of a statutory letter

Published: Tuesday 14 July, 2020

Reference:

Geographical coverage: England

Description: The Government has issued supplementary statutory notice to IfATE for the financial year 2020 to 2021 following the government's response to the consultation on improving higher technical education.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/899804/Statutory_notice_IfATE.pdf

Higher Technical Education Reforms

Author: -

Document type: Policy paper outlines what the government will do to reform higher technical education following a consultation held in 2019.

Published: Tuesday 14 July, 2020

Reference:

Geographical coverage: England

Description: This paper shows what the government will do to reform higher technical education following a consultation held in 2019. It explains the government's plans to introduce a national scheme to approve

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higher technical qualifications following a consultation, held in 2019, on Improving higher technical education and an independent consultation analysis published in July 2020.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-technical-education-reforms>

Traineeships

Author: Andy Powell

Source: House of Commons Library

Document type: House of Commons Research Briefing

Published: Friday 17 July, 2020

Reference: CBP-7305

Geographical coverage: England

Description: This note provides background on traineeships: what they are, what they entail, how they are funded, and guidance for prospective employers and providers.

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7305/>

Youth Unemployment Statistics

Authors: Andy Powell, Brigid Francis-Devine and Niamh Foley

Source: House of Commons Library

Document type: House of Commons Research Briefing/Statistical Note

Published: Thursday 16 July, 2020

Reference: SN 05871

Geographical coverage: England

Description: This paper presents the latest statistics on youth unemployment in the UK as well as comparisons with other EU countries.

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn05871/>

Statistics published last week

Education and Training

16 July 2020

DfE

Statistical data set

These files give Information on education and training by participation and achievements, including offender learning. This statistical data set includes information on education and training participation and achievements broken down into a number of reports including sector subject areas, participation by gender, age, ethnicity and disability participation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-education-and-training>

Apprenticeships and Traineeships Data

16 July 2020

DfE

Statistical data set

These files give information on the number of apprenticeship starts, achievements, and participation, and additional traineeship measures. These tables also include additional learner information such as:

- sector subject area (SSA)
- frameworks and standards
- geography (region, LAD, PCON)
- demographics (e.g. gender, age, LDD, ethnicity)
- provider information

This section also includes tables for traineeships, reporting starts, completions and progressions.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-apprenticeships>

Further Education and Skills Data

16 July 2020

DfE and ESFA

Statistical data set

These files give information on learners, learning programmes and learner achievement. This includes information on learners who are studying on a course at a further education college, learners studying courses within their local community, employees undertaking an apprenticeship, and employees undertaking other qualifications in the workplace. Note: data on providers is only published annually.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-further-education-and-skills>

Further Education and Skills: July 2020

16 July 2020

DfE

National statistics

These 19 files provide further education and skills data, including apprenticeships, for the first three quarters of the 2019 to 2020 academic year in England (August 2019 to April 2020, reported to date). This comprises adult (aged 19 and over) government-funded further education (excluding schools and higher education) comprising:

- education and training
- English and maths
- community learning

Additional data relating to all age apprenticeships (participation and achievements) are also being published for the first time in this release along with further breakdowns of the apprenticeship starts covering this same time frame, as published in the Apprenticeship and traineeships: June 2020 statistics publication. Headline further education figures include traineeships and apprenticeships where appropriate. Further breakdowns of these data are available in the FE data library. Commentary and statistics specific to the last full academic year can be found in the Further education and skills: November 2019 statistics publication.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-july-2020>

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Attendance in Education and Early Years Settings During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak: 23 March to 9 July 2020

14 July 2020

DfE

Official statistics

These two files provide a summary of attendance in education settings since Monday 23 March and early years settings since Thursday 16 April. All education settings were closed except for vulnerable children and the children of key workers due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak from Friday 20 March 2020. From 1 June, the government asked schools to welcome back children in nursery, reception and years 1 and 6, alongside children of critical workers and vulnerable children. From 15 June, secondary schools, sixth form and further education colleges were asked to begin providing face-to-face support to students in year 10 and 12 to supplement their learning from home, alongside full time provision for students from priority groups. The data on Explore education statistics shows attendance in education settings since Monday 23 March and in early years settings since Thursday 16 April. The summary explains the responses for a set time frame. The data is collected from a daily education settings survey and a weekly local authority early years survey.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak-23-march-to-9-july-2020>

Abbreviations

| | |
|---------|---|
| BEIS | Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy |
| DEFRA | Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs |
| DfE | Department for Education |
| DfE(NI) | Department for the Economy (Northern Ireland) |
| ESFA | Education and Skills Funding Agency |
| HESA | Higher Education Statistics Agency |
| HMPPS | Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service |
| NHS | National Health Service |
| NICTS | Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service |
| NIE | Northern Ireland Executive |
| NISRA | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency |
| Ofqual | Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation |
| Ofsted | Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills |
| ONS | Office of National Statistics |
| PHE | Public Health England |
| QW | Qualifications Wales |
| SfW | Statistics for Wales |
| SGALSD | Scottish Government Advanced Learning and Science Directorate |
| SGCED | Scottish Government Chief Economist Directorate |
| SGCFD | Scottish Government Children and Families Directorate |
| SGELCPD | Scottish Government Early Learning and Childcare Directorate |
| SGMHD | Scottish Government Mental Health Directorate |
| SGPHD | Scottish Government Public Health Directorate |
| SGLD | Scottish Government Learning Directorate |
| SLC | Student Loans Company |
| SQA | Scottish Qualifications Authority |
| STA | Standards and Testing Agency |
| SW | StatsWales |
| YJANI | Youth Justice Agency for Northern Ireland |
| YJBEW | Youth Justice Board for England and Wales |
| WG | Welsh Government |

Consultations published last week

There were no relevant consultations or consultation outcomes on education or training published last week.

Statutory instruments issued last week

The Industrial Training Levy (Construction Industry) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020

Year and number: 2020/136

Enabling power: S.I. 1984/1159 (N.I. 9), arts 23 (2)(3), 24 (3) (4).

Issued: 15.07.2020.

Made: 08.07.2020.

Laid: 09.07.2020.

Coming into operation: 31.08.2020.

Effect: None.

Geographical coverage: Northern Ireland.

Classification: General. Statutory Rule of Northern Ireland.

Price of print edition: £6.90. (The electronic edition is free.)

ISBN: 9780338013163.

Details: This Order gives effect to proposals submitted by the Construction Industry Training Board to the Department for the Economy for the imposition of a further levy upon employers in the construction industry for the purpose of raising money towards the expenses of the Board.

The levy is to be imposed in respect of the fifty-sixth levy period, commencing on 1st September 2020 and ending on 31st August 2021. The levy will be assessed by the Board and will be payable in two instalments. There will be a right of appeal against an assessment to an industrial tribunal.

The levy rate of 0.55% in respect of relevant earnings remains the same as the rate operating during the preceding levy period which expires on 31st August 2020 (see Industrial Training Levy (Construction Industry) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019 (S.R. 2019 No. 155)).

As in the previous levy period there will be no remission of levy given to employers in the industry.

An employer will be exempt from levy in the fifty-sixth levy period where the relevant earnings are less than £80,000.

Returning to education after COVID-19

David Evennett (Con, Bexleyheath and Crayford) asked the Secretary of State what steps her Department was taking to help children in developing countries to return to education after the COVID-19 pandemic. (House of Commons, oral questions to the Department for International Development, 15 July 2020.) The Secretary of State for International Development, Anne-Marie Trevelyan (Con, Berwick-upon-Tweed) said that her Department had recently announced £5.3 million of new funding to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to enable over 5,000 teachers to provide education in 10 refugee hosting countries.

David Evennett asked how the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office would assist the Global Partnership for Education replenishment in 2021. Anne-Marie Trevelyan said that the UK was the largest bilateral donor to the Global Partnership for Education, as it had committed up to £225 million over a three-year period. She pointed out that as a major education multilateral, the UK Government had a key role in tackling the global learning crisis. Ms Trevelyan pointed out that the GPE was flexing about £400 million to support education stability, and the UK was keen to play an active part in the 2021 replenishment. She added that the UK Government was currently exploring the possibility of co-hosting the replenishment.

Sarah Champion (Lab, Rotherham) pointed out that IMC Worldwide had been commissioned by DfID to build 31,000 classrooms in Pakistan for a fee of £107 million. But she added that while it had renegotiated to only build a fifth, it had kept 58% of the initial fee. Ms Champion said that the majority of the classrooms that had been built had been substandard and they presented a risk to children, and by October 2019, only a quarter had been retrofitted. She asked the Secretary of State to put the two DfID reviews into what had gone wrong in the public domain and why the same classroom design was being used in other countries.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan said that as soon as DfID had been alerted to the problem, it had taken urgent action to ensure that all schools knew that the buildings should not be used, while the Department worked with the contractor to agree a plan for retrofitting the affected buildings. She said that while COVID-19 has caused some delays, the first of the buildings would be handed over shortly, in a state that had been considered acceptable.

The following written questions were answered in Parliament last week

House of Commons

Department for Education

Apprentices: Taxation

John Spellar: [69423] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure Apprenticeship Levy funds can be used to support (a) current and (b) future construction apprentices after the COVID-19 outbreak.

Mick Whitley: [69691] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans the Government has to permit flexibility in the use of Apprenticeship Levy funds to help mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak on (a) current and (b) potential construction apprentices.

Gillian Keegan: Apprenticeships will be key to our recovery, especially for young people. We are looking at ensuring that we support employers, especially small businesses, to take on new apprentices this year and will provide further details in due course. The apprenticeship levy is an important part of our apprenticeship reforms, supporting employers of all sizes to make a long-term, sustainable investment in training. We will ensure that there is sufficient funding to support small businesses wanting to take on an apprentice this year. We recognise that employers, at the moment, face increased challenges with hiring new apprentices and so we will introduce a new payment of £2,000 to employers in England for each new apprentice they hire aged under 25, and a £1,500 payment for each new apprentice they hire aged 25 and over, from 1 August 2020 to 31 January 2021. Details can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hmtreasury>.

We are developing a campaign plan to underpin our work on supporting the recovery and getting redundant apprentices back to work. As part of this campaign we will be working with all the largest construction businesses to ensure they can restart and recover as quickly as possible. This will include encouraging the sector to take on redundant apprentices from other employers both inside and outside of construction. In light of the challenges presented by COVID-19, we have extended the transition of non-levy paying employers onto the apprenticeship service from 1 November 2020 to 1 April 2021.

Under the new system, smaller employers will have more control over the funding they use to create new apprenticeship opportunities and can reserve funds before choosing the provider that best meets their needs. Levy-paying employers can transfer up to 25% of the annual value of funds in their apprenticeship service accounts to other employers. Employers can continue to recruit and train apprentices. They already have 24 months in which to spend their funds before these expire. We want apprentices and employers to continue with their apprenticeships and have introduced a range of flexibilities to make this easier, while maintaining the quality of apprenticeships.

Flexibilities include encouraging remote delivery of training and allowing changes to end point assessment, as well as introducing additional flexibility to allow furloughed apprentices to continue their apprenticeships and undertake end point assessments.

Employers are developing new apprenticeships standards, allowing them to spend the levy on the apprenticeships training that matters for them. There are now 86 construction standards that have been designed by employers across a range of levels to meet employer demand to date and a further 12 construction standards that are currently in development.

Tuesday 14 July 2020

Construction Industry Training Board

Alex Norris: [69651] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of ending the Construction Industry Training Board levy.

Gillian Keegan: There is no assessment planned with regards to the merits of ending the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) levy. The most recent assessment completed as a tailored review, was undertaken, and published in November 2017. As well as providing several recommendations to CITB, it concluded that the current levy process was the most appropriate way to specifically support and incentivise the sector.

Tuesday 14 July 2020

Digital Technology: Training

Chi Onwurah: [69541] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to help ensure digital skills are available to everybody who needs them; and what discussions he has had with organisations involved in digital skills training on delivering that training.

Gillian Keegan: The government recognises the critical importance of digital skills both in everyday life and for the wider UK economy. That is why we have invested in digital skills that support lifelong learning and the acquisition of digital skills from foundation level right through to those required for cutting edge digital industries. The acquisition of digital skills in the school space is supported by the National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE), backed by investment of £84 million. The NCCE are delivering a comprehensive programme to improve the teaching of computing and drive up participation in computer science, particularly amongst girls.

We are also reforming technical education, with the support of employers, including new apprenticeships in data science, creative digital design, network engineering and cyber security. The first of 3 new Digital T Levels (Digital Production, Design and Development) will be introduced this September with a further two (Digital Support and Services and Digital Business Services) to follow in 2021. In April this year, in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, we provided opportunities for people to acquire new skills whilst at home by launching the Skills Toolkit. This Toolkit gives people access to free, high quality digital and numeracy courses and resources to help build up their skills, progress in work and enhance their career prospects. It was developed by a range of businesses, educational institutions and professional bodies. From August 2020, adults with no or low digital skills will have full funding to undertake improved digital skills qualifications, based on new national standards for essential digital skills, up to Level 1.

Finally, the Government has committed £2.5 billion investment through the National Skills Fund that provides a great opportunity to dramatically reboot the adult skills landscape. Boosting productivity and ensuring more people and places can share in the rewards that improved productivity can bring. We are keen to hear views from a wide range of stakeholders, including digital skills providers, that is why we plan to launch a consultation at a time when those who have an interest are able to engage. We will use the insights we gain to build an understanding of how best to target the fund, to ensure it has the best possible impact.

Tuesday 14 July 2020

Apprentices: Construction

Mick Whitley: [69690] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to help increase the number of apprentice places available in the construction industry.

Mick Whitley: [69692] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that there is greater (a) gender and (b) BAME diversity among construction apprentices.

Gillian Keegan: Apprenticeships will have an important role to play in creating employment opportunities, particularly for young people, and in supporting employers in all sectors to access the skilled workforce that they need to recover and grow following the COVID-19 outbreak. We will ensure that there is sufficient funding to support all businesses wanting to take on an apprentice this year and will provide further details in due course. Apprenticeships are jobs with training and form an employer-led programme where employers choose which apprenticeships they offer to meet their current and future skills need.

There are currently 86 high-quality construction standards at different levels, designed by industry to equip individuals with the skills that employers want. A further 12 standards are in development and the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education is working to approve these as soon as possible. The construction industry will be key in supporting the country's economic recovery and the Prime Minister recently announced a £5 billion Capital Investment Plan to accelerate infrastructure projects aimed at stimulating the sector and help to recruit and retain staff including apprentices. We are working with the sector to encourage take up of new apprentices and continue to work with employers including Persimmons Homes and Balfour Beatty through our Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network (ADCN) to promote best practice in recruiting and supporting apprentices from diverse backgrounds and under-represented groups including Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) and women.

We recognise that employers, at the moment, face increased challenges with hiring new apprentices and so we will introduce a new payment of £2,000 to employers in England for each new apprentice they hire aged under 25, and a £1,500 payment for each new apprentice they hire aged 25 and over, from 1 August 2020 to 31 January 2021. Details can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hmtreasury>.

Wednesday 15 July 2020

Further Education: Coronavirus

Emma Hardy: [70484] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effect of covid-19 outbreak on agricultural colleges. **Emma Hardy:** [70485] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken to provide bespoke support to agricultural colleges during the covid-19 outbreak.

Gillian Keegan: We are aware of the financial impact COVID-19 has had on post-16 providers, including Agricultural Colleges.

We will continue to pay grant funded providers, including Agricultural Colleges, their scheduled monthly profiled payments for the remainder of the 2019/20 funding year and funding allocations for 2020/21 have been confirmed. Payments will be made in line with the national profile. The funding system also provides a programme cost weighting uplift for agriculture courses delivered in eligible land-based settings, reflecting their higher costs. For colleges in significant financial difficulties the existing support arrangements remain in place, including short-term solvency support via emergency funding.

The further education commissioner and his highly experienced team are able to talk through plans, concerns and issues. The department's pool of National Leaders of Governance (NLGs) are also able to offer support. Local Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) teams are also providing support and enquiries can be submitted through the ESFA enquiries service.

Wednesday 15 July 2020

Further Education: Free School Meals

Andrew Rosindell: [66823] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what financial support his Department will provide to colleges providing free school meals to students over the summer holidays in 2020.

Vicky Ford: Due to the unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 outbreak, we are providing extra funding to enable further education institutions to continue to provide free school meals for the 2020 summer holidays. The funding is for students who were eligible and claiming for free meals in further education institutions in the 2019-20 academic year. Further information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-free-meals-in-further-education-funded-institutions-for-2019-to-2020#coronavirus-covid-19-specific-update>.

Wednesday 15 July 2020

Training and Employment: Coronavirus

Catherine West: [72242] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how he plans to distribute funding to the most deprived communities for training and employment support as part of the Government's COVID-19 recovery plan.

Catherine West: [72243] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the level of skills funding for adults at risk of unemployment due to the covid-19 outbreak; and what steps he plans to take to enable people to retrain for employment opportunities in their locality.

Gillian Keegan: We have been working across Government to build a package of support measures to boost skills among those who will be hardest hit by the labour market impacts of COVID-19. On 8 July, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced measures across a range of targeted work-based training offers to support people to build the skills they need to get into work in all communities across the country. This amounts to investment of £1.6 billion in employment support schemes, which will substantially expand existing provision. This includes:

- £111 million to triple the number of traineeships;
- £17 million to triple the number of sector-based work academy placements;
- Paying businesses to take on new apprentices – an extra £2000 for each apprentice under 25 and £1,500 for apprentices over 25;
- £32 million to help 269,000 more people receive advice from the National Careers Service;
- £101 million for school/college leavers to study high value courses when there are not employment opportunities available to them.

Over the course of this Parliament, we are also providing £2.5 billion (£3 billion when including Barnett funding for devolved administrations) for a new National Skills Fund to help people learn new skills and prepare for the economy of the future. We are continuing to invest in education and skills training for adults through the Adult Education Budget (AEB) (£1.34bn in 2019/20 and 2020/21).

We will continue to explore options within adult education and will be making decisions on where we may be able to introduce flexibilities to aid the Post-COVID recovery. In areas where we have devolved the AEB, it is for Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) / Greater London Authority (GLA) to determine funding arrangements for adult education for their residents. We do, however, appreciate the importance of sharing, and where appropriate, co-ordinating, responses to attempt to ensure that providers, of all types, do not have their funding disrupted as a result of COVID-19.

We are continuing to keep MCAs and the GLA updated on our skills response to COVID-19 through weekly conversations. Devolving the AEB enables MCAs to directly support adults in developing the skills

that local employers need, reducing skills shortages, boosting productivity and economic prosperity, and improving wellbeing in communities.

Within the AEB funding formula we pay a disadvantage uplift to provide extra funding to support the most disadvantaged learners, recognising that they are sometimes more costly to recruit and retain. The uplift is based on the learner's post code and results in a funding increase for learners living in the most deprived areas of the country, as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015.

There is also an area cost uplift within the AEB funding formula which reflects the higher cost of delivering training provision in some parts of the country, such as London and the South East. We fund education and training for 16 to 19-year-olds through the National Funding Formula which includes extra funding for disadvantaged students. This funding is provided to institutions specifically for students with low prior attainment, or who live in the most disadvantaged areas. We also provide an area cost uplift to reflect the higher costs of delivering education in some parts of the country such as London and the South East.

Wednesday 15 July 2020

Department of Health and Social Care

Nurses: Students

Olivia Blake: [60895] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, prior to student nurses taking paid placements in the NHS as part of the recruitment measures to address the covid-19 outbreak what information was provided on the terms and conditions of those placements; and what end date was included in that information.

Helen Whately: [Holding answer 22 June 2020]: We are extremely grateful to all student nurses who have supported the COVID-19 response, by opting into a paid placement for their time in practice at the frontline during the pandemic.

NHS England has been funding the support to trusts where the contracts are held and Health Education England (HEE) has been brokering appropriate placements between the university and trust. HEE published 'Student Support Guidance during the COVID-19 Outbreak' for nursing and midwifery students in March 2020. It advised students undertaking a placement that they would agree the exact nature of their role with the organisation in which they would be working and have a contract that incorporated the terms of the NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook, plus any local agreements in place in the organisation to which they were deployed.

The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Student%20support%20guide%20master%20.pdf>

Monday 13 July 2020

Health Professions: Training

Sarah Owen: [64359] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of reforming the financing of health professionals' education.

Helen Whately: [Holding answer 29 June 2020]: The Government keeps the funding arrangements for all pre-registration undergraduate and postgraduate National Health Service health professionals' education under close review, to ensure that students are appropriately supported. In 2017 pre-registration nursing,

midwifery and allied health profession students became eligible for tuition fee and maintenance loans, receiving at least 25% more funding for living costs support than under the previous system.

The Government introduced the Learning Support Fund which provides a child dependants allowance, reimbursement of all additional travel costs to attend clinical placements and an exceptional hardship fund. From September 2020, all eligible new and continuing pre-registration nursing, midwifery and most allied health profession students studying at English universities would benefit from a new, non-repayable, training grant of at least £5,000 per academic year in addition to the funding available already through the Learning Support Fund.

Friday 17 July 2020

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

English Language: Education

Naz Shah: [71077] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding he plans to allocate to the ESOL programme in (a) 2020 and (b) each of the next five years.

Simon Clarke: a The £5.1 million ESOL for Integration Fund is supporting 30 local authorities in 2020 / 21 to deliver English language sessions for residents with little or no English helping them to integrate more widely with the people, places and amenities in their local area. Through the Integration Area Programme, we continue to fund Integration Areas to deliver English language classes in innovative ways to address local integration challenges – this is supporting communities to better integrate, participate fully in society and access the opportunities that life in modern Britain provides.

Additionally, MHCLG funded resources to support organisations and individuals seeking to provide volunteer led English language clubs were recently published via the Learning and Work Institute website. b Subject to the Department’s future funding settlement we will explore how MHCLG funds ESOL provision beyond 20/21 at that point.

Friday 17 July 2020

Department for Work and Pensions

Employment Schemes: Young People

Alison Thewliss: [71092] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether young people in receipt of universal credit will be sanctioned if they do not take up a place on the Kickstart jobs scheme.

Mims Davies: A personalised, tailored claimant commitment is agreed between the work coach and the claimant. They will only set reasonable requirements, based on the claimant’s circumstances and the local/national public health guidelines. Further details about the Kickstart Scheme will be set out in due course.

Alison Thewliss: [71093] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether young people who are medically shielding from covid-19 will be required to take up a place on the Kickstart jobs scheme.

Mims Davies: Those who have declared a health condition that restricts their ability to work, including those who are shielding and clinically extremely vulnerable, will not be required to be available for work.

Further details about the Kickstart Scheme will be set out in due course.

Alison Thewliss: [71094] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what conditions will be placed on employers participating in the Kickstart jobs scheme to protect the employment conditions of workers aged 25 and over.

Mims Davies: The Kickstart scheme will protect the employment conditions of workers aged 25 and over. Jobs available to young people, aged 16-24, will be new jobs - with the funding conditional on the employer demonstrating these jobs are additional. Further details about the Kickstart Scheme will be set out in due course.

Monday 13 July 2020

Employment Schemes: Young People

Neil Gray: [71789] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the HM Treasury 8 July 2020 policy paper entitled A Plan for Jobs 2020, what plans she has to support people through the expanded Youth Offer programme.

Mims Davies: Young people in particular can be at an additional disadvantage due to limited work experience. DWP's new youth offers will include a structured 13-week programme, during which they will be helped in their search for work and referred to the most appropriate support such as careers advice, a sector-based work academy, a traineeship, work experience, mentoring circles or an apprenticeship. Once they have completed this programme participants will be encouraged to take up work-related training or an apprenticeship. Young people who require further support will be referred to young people's hubs and specialist employability coaches.

Friday 17 July 2020

House of Lords

Education and Unemployment: Young People

Lord Alton of Liverpool: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Resolution Foundation Class of 2020: Education leavers in the current crisis, published in May, in particular its (1) finding that youth unemployment in Britain could reach one million over the coming year, and (2) recommendation that policies should be pursued to assist young people to continue to study, including the provision of maintenance support. [HL5741]

Baroness Berridge: We welcome the focus that the Resolution Foundation report draws to the challenge of supporting young people to progress into work and training. The Government is actively considering ways to help young people continue to develop the skills they will need for the future. We want to give young people the best chance to succeed, despite these challenging and unsettling times. As part of raising the participation age legislation Local Authorities have duties to track all academic age 16 and 17-year-olds, identify those not in education, employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming so and supporting them to re-engage in education or training. This includes a September guarantee where Local Authorities need to ensure that all year 11 students and year 12 students on a one-year course have a suitable offer of education or training for the following September.

The department provides a range of financial support for students aged 16 to 19, to enable them to participate and stay in further education, including free meals, bursaries to help with the cost of travel, books, equipment, IT and connectivity, plus support for childcare and residential costs. Further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-educationfinancial-support-for-students>. For those learners aged 19 and over, the DfE supports a broad spectrum of learning provision from non-formal, unaccredited learning which helps to engage disadvantaged learners through to Apprenticeships and Traineeships where learners can gain the skills and qualifications needed to get into work. Learners aged 19 or over who are studying on a further education course and facing financial hardship may be eligible for Learner Support to pay for things like: accommodation and travel, course materials and equipment and childcare. Further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/learner-support>.

On apprenticeships, we are continuing to support employers and training providers in dealing with, and responding to, the impacts of COVID-19. While we do not yet know the full impact of COVID-19, our priority is ensuring that apprentices and employers can continue to access high quality training, both now and in the future. We continue to support traineeships and have introduced flexibilities to enable providers to continue to deliver them where possible, given that traineeships will play an important part in supporting young people back into learning and work. In early June this year, we launched a £7 million Alternative Provision Transition Fund to enable Alternative Provision schools to support all their Year 11 pupils to transition successfully into post-16 settings this summer, and avoid becoming NEET.

Monday 13 July 2020

Employment Schemes: Coronavirus

Lord Porter of Spalding: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether employment programmes could be targeted to support the economic recovery of local authority areas from COVID-19. [HL6418]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The economic recovery package will have a number of components, at both national and local levels. Although contracted provision is often delivered more effectively at national level, we recognise the key role local areas will have in supplementing that provision with the best possible support offer, tailored more specifically to local needs. The Department offers significant support to unemployed people across Great Britain, through our network of Jobcentres. Our Jobcentres are using digital technology to host virtual job fairs, working with employers to deliver online mentoring circles and facilitating sector-based work academies. In addition, Work Coaches are conducting customer support calls with new Universal Credit and New Style Jobseekers Allowance claimants, providing support with finding a job, help with retraining or skills advice, CVs and job applications, and access to the new vacancies.

Thursday 16 July 2020

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