



Pearson UK – Funding News

19 March 2015

Funding News provides a regular round-up of 16-18, 19+ and apprenticeship funding, and related news from government departments, funding agencies and other relevant organisations.

Key funding news this week:

Government departments

- New model for funding Apprenticeships confirmed (BIS)
- Apprenticeships and the National Minimum Wage (BIS)
- Apprenticeship reforms: progress report for employers (BIS)
- 16 to 19 study programmes and Traineeships: advice on planning and provision (DfE)
- 16 to 19 study programmes and Traineeships: work experience (DfE)

Skills Funding Agency

- Funding rules 2015 to 2016 version 2
- Funding statements for 2015 to 2016
- Guidance for recording A and AS levels on the ILR for 2015 to 2016

Education Funding Agency

- Local authority school funding formulae data 2015 to 2016
- 16 to 25 young people with high needs - funding principles for 2015 to 2016
- Traineeships for EFA funded institutions for 2015 to 2016

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- 19+ funding and level 2 BTECs – a reminder
- Steve Besley's Policy Watches

Government departments

New model for funding Apprenticeships confirmed (BIS)

In the middle of a [press briefing](#) on the National Minimum Wage the government have confirmed apprenticeships from 2017 will be funded through a new digital voucher system. The system is intended to give employers 'purchasing power' over the government contribution to apprenticeship funding. Employers will register their details on a system being developed by the Skills Funding Agency. These will include their type of business, details of the apprentice and the apprenticeship standard being signed up to. The rate, or discounted rate (which could be up to 100% for 16 to 18 year olds) at which employers can purchase training will be calculated and the employer passes on the voucher code to the provider delivering the training. The provider will then reclaim the value of the voucher from the Agency. Further details should follow before the end of March.

Apprenticeships and the National Minimum Wage (BIS)

The other news in the [press briefing](#) is the increase to the National Minimum Wage. It will increase by 3% to £6.70 per hour, and by 57p to £3.30 an hour for apprentices. This will halve the gap with the National Minimum Wage rate for 16 to 17 year olds, which will be £3.87 an hour. All the changes are effective from October 2015. The government will launch a consultation with businesses on the future of the National Minimum Wage rate for apprentices.

Apprenticeship reforms: progress report for employers

On March 12 BIS released a 12-page [update](#) on the apprenticeship reforms aimed at employers which includes infographics and 'myth busters'. It encourages employers to employ an apprentice and to consider becoming part of a trailblazer group to develop a new standard.

16 to 19 study programmes and Traineeships: planning and provision (DfE)

The DfE released updated [advice](#) on 17 March on the planning and provision of 16 to 19 study programmes covering 2014/15 and 2015/16. The 12-page guide covers study programme principles, broad programme characteristics (students taking A Levels, students taking applied and technical qualifications, the Technical Baccalaureate, Traineeships, the large programme uplift, and students with learning difficulties and disabilities) and delivering study programmes (GCSE maths and English, core maths, work experience, other activities within a study programme, funding, and accountability).

16 to 19 study programmes and Traineeships: work experience (DfE)

The DfE also released updated [advice](#) on 17 March on work experience within 16 to 19 study programmes and Traineeships covering 2014/15 and 2015/16. The 15-page guide covers high quality work experience (work experience within study programmes, work experience placements with external employers, simulated working environments, and Traineeship work experience placements), employer involvement (National Minimum Wage), what Ofsted inspectors look for when they inspect work experience, health & safety, and further sources of information. It also includes a work readiness checklist. Further advice on [funding work experience](#) was published on 5 March on the EFA website.

Skills Funding Agency

Funding rules 2015 to 2016 version 2

The Agency will shortly publish Version 2 of the Funding Rules 2015 to 2016. This is an update to [Version 1](#) published in February and will incorporate feedback from the sector. The rules apply from 1 August 2015.

Funding statements for 2015 to 2016

The Agency will shortly issue 2015 to 2016 funding statements through [the Hub](#). The funding statements set out provider allocations for 16 to 18 apprenticeships and Agency-funded Traineeships, adult skills, 24+ advanced learning loans, community learning, discretionary support funding and 24+ advanced learning loan bursary facility, and offenders' learning and skills service. The Agency will also publish an updated [guidance note](#) and later this month will update the statements to include Apprenticeship Grant for Employer facilities for 2015/16.

Guidance for recording A and AS levels on the ILR for 2015 to 2016

This isn't new news but useful for anyone delivering A levels who hasn't already picked up on it. The Agency has produced a 5-page [guide](#) to recording A and AS levels on the ILR for 2015/16. From August 2015 new linear A levels will be introduced in a number of subject areas and the AS will be decoupled from the A level. From 1 August 2015 the use of A2 learning aims will be discontinued and they will not be available in LARS or recorded on the ILR. Providers should record the learning aim that a learner is working towards; either an AS or A level. Where a learner takes an AS and continues with further study to take the A level in the same subject, both the AS learning aim and A level learning aim must be recorded.

- *For Skills Funding Agency* funded A levels if a learner undertakes both an AS and an A level in the same subject providers will need to record a funding adjustment on the ILR for the A level to take into account the prior learning completed for the AS.
- *For Education Funding Agency* funded A levels no funding adjustment is required as the funding per student methodology uses planned hours for the year to determine funding.
- *For 24+ loan* funded A levels, learners will be able to apply for a loan for both AS and A levels. Loans for A2 learning aims will be discontinued. Where a learner applies for a loan for an A level after sitting the AS in the same subject, the provider must reduce the fee for the A level to take into account the prior learning completed for the AS.

Education Funding Agency

Local authority school funding formulae data 2015 to 2016

The EFA have published data showing local authorities' [formulae for allocating dedicated schools grant \(DSG\) schools block funding](#) for 2015/16. The data is accompanied by a report providing further information and brief commentary.

16 to 25 young people with high needs - funding principles for 2015 to 2016

An updated document on [16 to 25 Young People with High Needs: Funding Principles for 2015 to 2016](#) has been published by the EFA. This replaces their previous 16 to 25 high needs additional information document. The guide is primarily for local authorities and institutions and is intended to support the commissioning discussions over the coming months as student placements are agreed. The guide also describes how the high needs funding system will work for post-16 institutions for the academic year 2015/16.

Traineeships for EFA funded institutions for 2015 to 2016

[Information on traineeships](#) for EFA-funded institutions has been published which covers changes and funding implications for 2015/16.

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19+ funding and level 2 BTECs – a reminder

A reminder that following government announcements this spring, we can now clarify funding for students aged 19+ studying BTEC Firsts in England.

- The Skills Funding Agency automatically fund qualifications approved by the DfE as Level 2 Technical Certificates on the 16-19 performance tables. This means that all BTEC Firsts included on the Technical Certificate list are approved for 19+ funding for 2014/15 and 2015/16.
- Where the NQF qualifications have not been approved as Technical Certificates, we have extended the existing BTEC Level 2 First Diplomas to ensure this provision remains available for 19+ learners for 2014/15.
- We want to ensure you have continuity for your level 2 students in all subjects, so where BTEC Firsts are not approved as Technical Certificates, we are applying to the Agency for 19+ funding for 2015/16 for the next generation BTEC Level 2 Firsts (NQF) where appropriate, and extending, and applying to the Agency for 19+ funding for, the existing BTEC Level 2 First Diplomas (QCF).

See the [BTEC information hub](#) for more.

Steve Besley's Policy Watches

The latest from Steve Besley includes [Policy Eye - week ending March 13 2015](#), [Pocket Watch – Three Lessons from National Apprenticeship Week](#), and [Pocket Watch – The Free School Conundrum](#). Find these and more on the [Pearson UK](#) website.

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Information is correct at the time of writing and is offered in good faith. No liability is accepted for decisions made on the basis of information given.