This bulletin is intended for colleges, schools, local authorities and other providers. You can read articles for academies in the full version of the e-bulletin on our website.

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Information: School funding arrangements 2013-14

Sarah Healey, Director of Education Funding Group at the Department for Education, wrote to all Directors of Children’s Services on Friday 12 October to provide clarification and reassurance about the school funding arrangements in 2013/14. The letter confirms that the Department will review these arrangements and will make further changes in 2014-15 if it finds that the long term consequences for schools are unacceptable.

The letter also confirms that the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) will continue to apply at -1.5% per pupil in 2013-14 and 2014-15. To address the concerns that some schools and authorities have raised about a potential ‘cliff-edge’ in funding from 2014-15, the letter gives reassurance that an MFG will continue beyond 2014-15. As this falls in the next spending review period, we are unable to confirm the value of that MFG.

The Department hopes that this letter provides local authorities, schools, teachers and governors with reassurance that the reform to the school funding system will be introduced very carefully and, as the Secretary of State promised in March, at a pace which is manageable.

Reminder – funding briefing events

Don’t forget that we have organised briefings about the funding arrangements for 2013/14. These are now underway but you can still book on sessions for post-16 funding and academies.

Information: 16-19 funding formula 2013/14 and shadow allocations for 2012/13

We are introducing a system of funding per student for post-16 providers for 2013/14.

This follows the review of 16-19 funding carried out in response to the 2011 Schools White Paper, The importance of teaching. The White Paper pledged to introduce simple, fair and transparent funding methodology to support raising the participation age.

The new 16-19 funding formula will cover all those aged 16-19. It will also cover all high needs students aged 16-19 and those aged 19 and up to age 25 with a Learning Difficulty Assessment or Education and Healthcare Plan. Independent specialist providers and non-maintained schools will be funded via the national 16-19 formula for the first time.

This new formula introduces funding at a basic rate per student per year adjusted for retention, programme costs, disadvantage and area costs. We have summarised changes in a letter to all post-16 providers being sent out this week which includes all developments since the publication of the formula in July (including confirmation of the bands for funding part time students and programme cost weightings).
Technical briefings explaining these changes are taking place until 9 November, and you can book via our website.

We will upload a shadow allocation for each post-16 institution to the IM Portal by the end of the month, and we will notify you when these are available. Your shadow allocation is for illustrative purposes only in preparation for 2013/14. It will show how the funding formula is calculated against data used in your 2012/13 academic year allocation. More information is available on our website.

Information: Work Placement in Foundation Learning – increased rate for 2012/13

We have increased the rate for the Work Placement in Foundation Learning aim (LARA code ZFLP0001). We have done this to prepare foundation learning providers for increased work experience delivery as part of Programmes of Study.

This aim was introduced last year to formalise and simplify the claiming by foundation learning providers for sourcing, vetting and monitoring work experience. We are doubling the rate with effect from 1 August, raising the cash value from £292 to £584.

All the rules regarding the aim use remain the same as 2011/12 when it was introduced. The letter announcing the increase and guidance regarding the aim’s use is available on our website. We will inform the sector when the rate increase is live on LARA.

Information: Post-16 EFA funding allocations for the academic year 2012/13

We have published post-16 EFA funding allocations for the academic year 2012/13 which were issued to institutions in March 2012. We publish these annually. They are available on our website for schools, academies and FE institutions from 2005/06 onwards.

We have published the data to improve transparency, give a more complete picture of education funding and to show how the EFA has allocated around £6bn of public funds.

Action: 16-19 Bursary Fund deadline for submissions

The deadline for Management Information return submissions for institutions and local authorities with an allocation of the 16-19 Bursary Fund is 31 October 2012. We sent details of how you can access and submit the returns in the week commencing 24 September. You can access the returns via the EFA’s IM Portal or the links below.
The in-year 2012/13 MI return data will be used to allocate additional funding to providers whose total allocation does not meet the costs of the awards to vulnerable group students. The data may also be used to inform future allocations.

The end of year 2011/12 MI return data will be used to inform the evaluation of the scheme and may also be used to inform future allocations.

If you have any other questions about the MI returns, you can contact us by email at 1619bursaryfund.EFA@education.gsi.gov.uk.

Information: How to obtain a Care to Learn 2012/13 application pack

Our Learner Support Service administers Care to Learn, which provides childcare support to young parents under the age of 20 who are in learning.

Young parents who wish to apply for this academic year can get an application pack by calling the Learner Support Service helpline on 0800 121 8989.

Previously, young people could request an application pack online from the directgov website. As part of a review of Care to Learn processes, we are removing this online application request and encouraging young parents to call the Learner Support Service directly for an application form.

This means young people will be able to receive advice and information about the support available to them at the same time as requesting an application pack. Calls to the Learner Support Service are free from a landline.

Schools, colleges and other providers can continue to order a small quantity of application packs by calling 0845 602 2260 or emailing learnersupport@prolog.co.uk. They can then distribute these packs to young parents attending their provision.

If you have any questions about the Care to Learn scheme you can contact the Learner Support Service on 0845 600 7979.

Information: Direct payments for Special Educational Provision

The Green Paper on SEN and disability, Support and aspiration, sets out the Government’s commitment to giving families of children with the proposed Education, Health and Care Plan the option of taking up a personal budget by 2014. One element of a personal budget can be a direct cash payment made to a family or carer to buy a service or a piece of equipment for their child.

Two thirds of families taking part in the Individual Budget (IB) pilot had opted to have a direct payment as part of their personal budget. The Green Paper proposes that we build on the experience of the pilots to include for elements of agreed provision within the scope of direct payments. Direct payments can only be made in respect of children and
young people with a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA).

This will be tested by the Green Paper pathfinder and IB pilot authorities. The Education Act 2011 gives the Secretary of State the power to establish, by order, a pilot scheme enabling the making of direct payments for special educational provision. The order can be found on the Legislation website.

Under paragraph 3 of the Pilot Scheme, local authorities are required to provide potential recipients with information and advice about direct payments when they issue a new or amended statement or LDA. Direct payments can only be operated with the agreement of the FE College or Independent Specialist Provider (ISP).

The Department for Education will shortly publish guidance that offers advice to pathfinders participating in the Pilot Scheme. It will explain the roles and responsibilities of local authorities, their partners, institutions and recipients of direct payments as set out in the Pilot Scheme. This will ensure that direct payments can be used safely and effectively. This guidance will be available on the SEND pathfinder website.

We have revised the ALS High Cost guidance, ALS high cost form and text on EFA Funding Guidance on our website.

Information: Lead arrangements for colleges

We have published details of operational processes for lead arrangements for sixth-form colleges and general FE colleges. We have produced these with the Skills Funding Agency. These operational processes support the Government’s ambition of alignment across the two agencies and the continuation of ‘lead arrangements’ for general FE colleges and sixth form colleges.

Lead arrangements mean that in certain circumstances, you will deal with a single agency. A guidance note explains how this relates to each stage of the business cycle where the institution currently has separate funding relationships with both agencies.

Information: Delivery of 16-18 learning in south Shropshire

We have completed the national, competitive process to identify potential investors for provision in Ludlow and South Shropshire. The process, which began in June, has completed and implementation discussions are underway with the successful applicant, Herefordshire College of Technology.
Information: Ofsted Common Inspection Framework 2012 update

On September 1 Ofsted started inspecting with a revised Common Inspection Framework and methodology. The republished handbook for further education and skills 2012 is in two parts. The first part explains the new methodology and the second the key criteria that inspectors must consider when making judgements in different learning and skills contexts.

Providers should also be aware of a number of key changes following the consultation:

- the period of notice of inspection has been reduced from ‘two to three weeks’ to ‘up to two working days’
- all providers which were satisfactory as of 1 September 2012 will be inspected within 2 years of September 2012
- if a provider inspected from September 2012 onwards receives a grade 3 for their overall effectiveness they will deemed as ‘requires improvement’ and receive another full inspection 12-18 months later.
- the revised framework has an increased emphasis on teaching, learning and assessment.

Further guidance is available on the Ofsted website including an ‘inspection ready’ form to help you prepare for short notice inspection.