

The Skills Funding Agency Adult Skills Offer – England

Guidance for Partnership Managers / District Teams

Please note that this guidance supports the Skills Offer in England. The Skills Offer in Scotland and Wales are covered in their respective chapters.

Overview

1. The consultation document “Skills for Sustainable Growth” describes a strategy to refocus government funding and encourage co-funding from employers and individual learners. It provides the opportunity for Jobcentre Plus to influence and shape provision at a local level to meet local demand.
2. The new Adult Skills Offer, provided by The Skills Funding Agency (the Agency), started in August 2011. The way training for adults is funded changed, making it more flexible. The introduction of job outcome incentive payments helps focus colleges and providers to deliver training which addresses the needs of the local labour market.
3. This guide is for District Partnership Managers, External Relations Managers Third Party Provision Managers / Teams and other operational colleagues working with colleges and training providers to negotiate and set up provision for claimants. This guide builds on the Senior Leader Brief number 99 issued 21 January 2011, which provided information on actions to take to support the introduction of the Skills Offer from August 2011. This included the need to start negotiations with their local colleges and training organisations. The sharing of labour market and customer flow information was to be a key part of these discussions to ensure that planned training met the local needs of claimants and employers.

Background to the Skills Offer from August 2011

4. The Skills Offer, funded through the Agency Adult Skills Budget, provides access to fully funded training for JSA and ESA (WRAG) claimants. It funds basic literacy and numeracy skills training and training towards a first NVQ level 2 for anyone who needs it. It is crucial that to maximise the offer, as far as possible;
 - The right training is offered at the right time; and
 - The right people are identified, supported and enabled to access training at the right time.
5. The Skills Offer delivers provision to support claimants early in their claim, helping them back to work before entry to the Work Programme. Provision includes:
 - Pre-Employment Training (including training to support sector based work academies) ;
 - Basic Skills (including ESOL);
 - Employability training including support with softer skills such as motivation and confidence building; and
 - Short vocational courses.
6. The Agency has further increased the offer by putting in place additional ESF funding to support those who are unemployed or who are facing redundancy. The Agency has created a list of successful colleges and training organisations. If offices have not already done so they may wish to contact these to agree how they can work together to meet the needs of the local labour market.
7. Colleges and training organisations have been given new freedoms and flexibilities allowing them to target resource where it is most needed. On this basis JCP should build

relationships with colleges and training organisations in the network. The skills support for the unemployed offer has been designed so that there is national coverage and so that JCP offices should not be left without any provision.

8. Where issues arise or there is a gap in coverage this should be discussed with Agency colleagues.

9. Where these discussions fail to resolve the issue, follow the Issue Communication & Responsiveness process.

10. Jobcentre Plus advisers have the option to refer claimants to either a college/training organisation who will determine the most appropriate training for that individual; or refer to National Careers Service for more in-depth advice and guidance.

11. Under Skills Conditionality all JSA and ESA (WRAG) claimants referred to National Careers Service, provider initial interview or provision are mandated to attend and participate.

12. Claimants with no identified skills need should not be mandated to training/provision, but signposted to National Careers Service or relevant provision. Further information for advisers can be found in the Skills Guide.

ESOL

13. A list of ESOL level descriptors has been produced to help advisers determine which activities a claimant should be able to undertake at each level; from Pre Entry level to Level 2.

14. When negotiating provision, providers should provide feedback on the level the claimant has achieved during training.

ESOL Funding Arrangements

15. For further details on funding arrangements for ESOL, see the Skills Funding Agency ESOL funding guidance

16. For details of English and Maths qualifications for 2013-14, please see list of ESOL & Maths Qualifications.

ESOL Future Update

17. The current Skills for Life ESOL qualifications will only be available until September 2014.

18. Over the next year, awarding organizations will develop a new generation of Skills for Life ESOL qualifications. These will be available from August 2014. Please see the ESOL Future Q&A paper for further details.

Skills Conditionality

19. Skills Conditionality was introduced in England in August 2011.

20. Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants in the Work Related Activity Group (WRAG) whose skills needs are the main barrier to them moving into work should be mandated to skills provision funded by the Skills Funding Agency to address those needs, or mandated to National Careers Service where skills needs are less clear.

Note: From August 2013, claimants aged 24+ referred to skills provision at level 3 or 4 cannot be mandated where DWP will not meet the costs of the course. See 24+ Advanced Learning Loans for further information.

21. Skills Conditionality applies to claimants attending provision on a full time or part time basis.

22. All JSA and ESA WRAG claimants referred to National Careers Service or provision in England (including Initial Provider Interviews) must attend, participate and complete provision, or face benefit sanctions.

Note: From August 2013, claimants aged 24+ referred to skills provision at level 3 or 4 cannot be mandated where DWP will not meet the costs of the course. See 24+ Advanced Learning Loans for further information.

23. Claimants with no identified skills need should not be mandated to training/provision, but signposted to the National Careers Service, or relevant provision. Further information can be found in the Skills Guide .

Work Programme and Skills Provision

24. Work Programme providers can refer to skills provision independently of Jobcentres and make their own arrangements with skills providers.

25. Claimants do not need to come into the Jobcentre to be referred by a Jobcentre adviser.

26. Work Programme referrals can be deferred in order to allow claimants to complete any skills provision they may already be participating in.

Course Registration Fees

27. It is recognised that in the past the issue of registration fees for courses has been raised. The Agency does not expect their contractors to pass these costs onto unemployed learners and this has been clarified in Agency guidance. The SFA funding arrangements for 2013-14 sets out which claimant groups can access fully funded training. Alternatively, visit <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/fundingrules/>

Payment for Licences and Training that leads to a Licence.

28. The Agency have now approved for funding, a number of regulated stand alone qualifications, licences and certificates which will be available to individuals on Jobseekers' Allowance (JSA) or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) in the Work Related Activity Group (WRAG) only (or those who are unemployed and on UC who are mandated in the future). The Agency will fund both the learning and the licence/certificate. The list of additional standalone qualifications and certificates provides full details of the additional training available.

29. There are numerous additional qualifications, which mainly fall under the broad headings of:

- Health and Safety
- Food Hygiene
- First Aid at Work
- Fork Lift Truck

30. The additional standalone qualifications offered reflect the national needs of districts, who were consulted in December 2012.

31. As the Agency may amend the qualifications list from time to time, you may wish to visit the Skills Funding Agency website to check on the most current details.

32. Where the licence /certificate is not one which can be funded by the Agency, it is crucial that Jobcentre agrees with the claimant or recruiting employer who will pay for the licence itself. District staff should also consider whether the licence can be funded via the Flexible Support Fund. For further information refer to Flexible Support Fund Guidance.

Eligibility- Fully funded provision

33. Regardless of benefit status, everyone aged 19 or over is eligible for fully funded provision to achieve;

- Basic literacy and numeracy;
- First full level 2 (equivalent to 5 GCSE's at grades A* - C); and
- For young adults aged 19 to 23 a first full level 3 qualification (equivalent to two 'A' levels).

24+ Advanced Learning Loans

34. Grant funding for skills provision at levels 3 and 4 for learners aged 24+ in England was removed from 1 August 2013. See 24+ Learning Loan Briefing for full details of eligibility and Skills Provision impacted by the change.

35. Where DWP will meet the costs of the course, claimants can be mandated under Skills Conditionality.

36. Where DWP will not meet the cost, the claimant will be required to take out an Advanced Learning Loan and cannot be mandated.

37. Claimants should be signposted to colleges/training organisations to discuss their eligibility for Loans.

38. Claimants whose Skills need is not the main barrier to them finding work, but are interested in a level 3 or 4 qualification should also be signposted to colleges/training organisations to discuss loan eligibility.

39. The Skills Funding Agency are responsible for identifying which providers will be eligible for delivering skills provision funded by means of a loan.

40. Financial advice should not be offered by Jobcentre advisers, National Careers Service, Colleges or Training organisations; The Money Advice Service can provide impartial advice.

24+ Learning Loans- Application process

41. Applications for loans for courses starting between 1 August 2013 and 31 July 2014 can be made from April 2013.

42. Learning Loans are only available to fund full qualifications or awards.

43. They cannot be used to fund individual units leading to qualifications or awards.

44. Claimants are responsible for making applications for loans, and can do so online or via paper application.

45. A learner can apply for a maximum of four Learning Loans, with the minimum loan amount being £300 and the maximum being the full course fee. Claimants can pay for all, or any part of the course fee themselves.

46. Colleges /Training organisations will confirm the course costs before enrolment.

47. Learning Loans are disregarded in relation to entitlement to JSA.

48. See the 24+ Learning Loan Briefing for full details.

24+ Learning Loans- Useful Links

49. Learner Fact sheet FAQs : www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/further-education

50. National Careers Service:

www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advancedlearningloans

51. The Money Advice Service www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/24-advanced-learning-loans-to-replace-gov-grants

Provision funded from the Adult Skills Budget

52. Provision made available from the Adult Skills budget provides fully funded access (full fee remission) for claimants of JSA and those in the ESA (WRAG) group who are aged 19 years and over to training that will help them get into work.

53. Claimants not eligible for full funding, for example, Lone Parents on Income Support who do not fall into one of the categories in paragraph 17, are able to access provision on a co-funded basis.

54. Jobcentre Plus District Managers may also choose to use the Flexible Support Fund to meet some of these costs, for further information refer to Flexible Support Fund Guidance.

55. For further details on funding arrangements for ESOL, see the Skills Funding Agency ESOL funding guidance.

18 Year Olds-Funding

56. The responsibility for funding provision for 18 year old customers lies with the Education Funding Agency (EFA) via the Learner Responsive Budget.

57. The EFA Learner Responsive budget funds qualifications drawn from the Learning Aim Reference Application (LARA) which includes the offer for Foundation students (qualifications below level 2, literacy and numeracy).

58. Many providers have access to the Learner Responsive Budget.

59. Adult Skills and Adult ESF budgets do not fund learning for 18 year olds.

60. Referrals for 18 year olds are made to the same provision and in the same way as other claimants.

61. Providers draw funding from the appropriate budget for individuals on each course.

62. Providers may also have access to EFA ESF funding, with a focus on those young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET. ESF can fund a variety of learning aims such as units of accreditation as well as full qualifications and non-accredited learning.

63. In some instances, providers do not have access to both budgets so are unable to provide for 18 year old Jobcentre customers.

64. Districts should identify and understand provider funding arrangements as part of collaborative partnership working to negotiate the local skills offer and ensure that a range of Providers are able to deliver to 18 year old customers.

65. List of providers able to provide for 18 year olds shows providers with access to both funding streams, and those with access to the Learner Responsive Budget only, who are therefore able to provide for 18 year olds.

66. The EFA funded providers spreadsheet is published each year in the autumn. Full details can be found on the EFA website.

67. Where there is no fundable provision available locally for 18 year old customers, Districts should liaise with the appropriate SFA contact to seek a resolution. An up to date list of contacts can be found in the Issue Communication & Responsiveness Process.

68. EFA contact email addresses follow the format *****

69. Skills conditionality applies irrespective of the provision funding stream.

16-18 year old learner definition- Funding

70. A 16-18 year old learner is any learner who is aged 16,17 or 18 on the 31st August in the relevant funding year.

71. Such learners are normally eligible for EFA funding.

72. To maintain eligibility for funding for individual learners during a learning programme, a wider definition has been agreed with the Skills Funding Agency.

73. Any learner who was aged 16, 17 or 18 on August 31st in the year in which they began a programme of study will continue to be funded as a 16-18 year old learner.

74. This will ensure that the funding eligibility of any learner who turns 19 during their course of study will not change.

75. Such learners are funded at age 16-18 rates and, if full time, may be funded for the 16-18 entitlement.

76. They do not have to pay tuition fees if they become 19 during their programme and colleges/providers may continue to claim fee remission.

19-24 year old funding for learners with a Learning Difficulty Assessment

77. The EFA also funds learners aged 19-24 on the 31st August in the relevant funding year who have a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) and have ALS needs over £5000 in the year.

78. Learners aged 19 or over who started their programme aged 16-18 (definition as described in the 16-18 year old learner definition- funding section) or otherwise known as “19+ Continuing learners” are funded by the Skills Funding Agency in Further Education, specialist colleges and independent private providers; but by the EFA in sixth form colleges, school and academies.

79. Funding for these learners in sixth form colleges was transferred to the EFA in 2011/12 and this continues.

80. All other learners aged 19 and over in the relevant funding year would not normally be funded by the EFA.

81. These learners would be funded at adult rates and be ineligible for entitlement funding unless they meet the eligibility criteria for learners completing learning programmes started whilst 16-18 as earlier explained.

Referrals

82. The same Referral processes apply to provision regardless of the funding stream.

National Careers Service

83. Claimants aged 18 and over are eligible for National Careers Service services.

84. The National Careers Service can be accessed by all claimants whatever their circumstances and can help in a range of ways including;

- Interview Tips
- Information on Job Types
- Help with CV preparation
- Help with identifying transferable skills
- Personal action planning
- Funding information
- A discussion of what options are available; and
- Course information.

Full Time/Part Time Training Considerations

85. Districts must consider the impact on the Flexible Support Fund (FSF) when discussing training with colleges/training organisations and claimants. This impacts the FSF as follows:

- JSA claimants mandated to training which is 16 hours or less each week, or up to two weeks full time in a 12 month period, are eligible to claim travel and childcare/replacement care costs from the FSF;
- JSA claimants who have been mandated to attend full time training which is over 16 hours each week must move onto a training allowance (unless JSA Full Time Training Flexibility applies) and are also eligible to claim travel and childcare/replacement care costs, all of which is funded from the FSF; and
- ESA (WRAG) claimants who are mandated to training are eligible to claim travel and childcare/replacement care costs from the FSF.

Traineeships

Traineeships-Overview

86. Traineeships are the priority policy for both the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) and The Department for Employment (DfE). This focuses on young people aged 16 up to 24 years old, living in England and who need extra help to get and sustain an Apprenticeship or other job.

87. Ministers are keen to ensure that more young people are able to compete for apprenticeships or jobs with training.

88. BIS estimate 30% of 18-24 year olds claiming JSA are not qualified to level 2 and have no history of work experience. There are currently around 75,000 young people qualified below Level 2 (GCSE A-C) who have been claiming JSA for between 3 months and 9 months.

89. Each month, after excluding those who gain early entry to the Work Programme, approximately 13,000 young people reach 3 months on JSA. Employment rates for those with no qualifications are around 58%, compared to 76% for those with level 2 (GCSE A-C) as their highest qualification.

90. Traineeships are non mandatory opportunities designed to:

- Improve job prospects
- Improve literacy and numeracy, where appropriate
- Give participants the opportunity to observe workplace skills and behaviours
- See how existing skills can be adapted to the workplace
- Gain real life work experience
- Build confidence and overcome problems which can interfere with successful learning
- Strengthen the CV, to include a work related reference/referee; and
- Give an employer opportunity to observe the trainee at work.

91. DWP have a key role to play in identifying and referring eligible young people to Traineeships.

Traineeships-DWP involvement

92. DWP is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the local design of Traineeships allows benefit claimants to participate, whilst retaining their existing benefit
- Referring suitable claimants to Traineeship opportunities on LMS. Ministers require us to keep data on referrals
- Working with training providers in conjunction with Skills Funding Agency, to ensure that effective feedback and communication processes are in place; and
- Agreeing processes with providers which are consistent with DWP expectations.

93. Existing data sharing arrangements between DWP and SFA apply.

94. DWP are not required to gather informed consent from claimants. Providers will obtain this in order to share data with employers.

Traineeships-Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and the Education Funding Agency (EFA)'s involvement

95. The Skills Funding Agency and EFA will be responsible for:

- Funding and regulating adult further education and skills in England
- Publishing data on the performance indicators for providers, which is part of the Framework for Excellence. This can be found on the Agency's website at: <http://ffe.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/>
- Promoting the requirement for reasonable adjustments to be made to accommodate the needs of disabled people or those with restrictions on their Jobseeker's Agreement – including, for example, flexibility to undertake the training part time
- Supporting the implementation of agreed feedback systems between skills providers and DWP
- Influencing colleges/training providers to comply with the process by providing quality and timely feedback
- Probity around the use of public funding in relation to the quality of the skills offer and service given by Colleges/Providers. All of the learning providers used in England will be registered on the Approved College & Training Organisation Register (ACTOR) and covered by the FE Quality Assurance System
- Reinforcing the expectations of DWP claimant attendance, participation and behaviour with colleges/training providers
- Covering the associated claimant costs whilst participating in a Traineeship- See Travel, Childcare and Replacement Care costs section for further details
- Communicating with employers and giving feedback to DWP where necessary and;
- Gathering informed consent in order to liaise with employers.

Traineeships-Eligibility

96. Traineeships are available to non benefit recipients where all other eligibility criteria is met.

97. From the first Work Focused Interview, Traineeships should be considered as a non mandatory referral option for claimants who are eligible and interested.

98. Benefit claimants should be in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) or Universal Credit (UC) only.

99. Claimants on Income Support (IS) or Employment Support Allowance (ESA) are not eligible for Traineeships.

100. The Traineeship programme was developed for those on JSA who could move into work relatively quickly following a Traineeship. It was felt ESA WRAG and IS claimants had more barriers to overcome and specific programmes were available for this purpose.

101. The Traineeship Delivery Framework states that Traineeship participants should not be working. A claimant may still be eligible for Traineeships if they are undertaking work a few hours a week and claiming an appropriate benefit; where that they meet the eligibility requirements.

102. Eligible Traineeship participants must:

- On the first day of their course, be aged between 16 and 23 years old (This includes claimants up to 23 years and 364 days old) or 16-24 years subject to a learning difficulty assessment and
- Be living in England from August 2013 and

- Have qualifications below Level 2 (up to GCSE level A-C) or below a full level 3 (A Level) qualification for 16-18 year olds and
- Have little or no work history; and
- Be close to the labour market.

Traineeships-JSA eligibility

103. Eligible JSA claimants include:

- Those in Joint Claims
- Customer and Partner claims where the claimant has a skills need; and
- Credits only claims.

Traineeships-Universal Credit Eligibility

104. Universal Credit eligible claimants should be in the “Working- could do more” or “Not working” groups.

Traineeships-Eligibility- Providers

105. Only Providers who hold a level 1 or 2 (Excellent or Good) Ofsted rating will be able to deliver Traineeships for the academic year 2013-14. This means that there may not be a Traineeship offer available in every part of the country.

106. For a list of eligible training providers, to include those who have agreed to deliver Traineeships, visit the Traineeships section of the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) website.

107. Providers not currently holding Ofsted ratings of 1 or 2 will be reassessed on a quarterly basis. Those achieving the grade will be added to the list. Details will be updated on the SFA website.

108. Providers will make contact with Jobcentres in order to design Traineeship delivery models.

109. Where approached by a provider who does not appear on the list of approved providers, eligibility should be checked with EFA/SFA. The list is not updated real-time.

110. Where approached by a provider who does not appear to hold a level 1 or 2 Ofsted rating, Districts should explain their understanding of the programme (that only Ofsted 1 & 2 rated providers can deliver) and refer the provider to EFA/SFA.

111. The actual provider, rather than any Prime provider must hold the appropriate Ofsted rating.

Traineeships- for people with disabilities

112. Claimants up to the academic age of 24 with a learning difficulty assessment are eligible to participate in Traineeships.

113. This is in line with existing educational opportunities.

Access to Work

114. The DWP Access to Work scheme was extended from 1 September 2013 to cover days that a Supported Intern or Trainee is at an ‘employers’ premises.

115. Access to Work may be able to provide support for claimants with disabilities for the Work Experience Placement element of the Traineeship only.

116. An Access to Work grant may help pay for travel (when young people are unable to use public transport) and workplace support workers, including job coaches. Young people will not have to pay any money back and it won’t affect their other benefits.

117. For more information, please visit the Access to Work homepage Or <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/overview>.

Traineeship design

118. Traineeships are study based programmes combined with work placements, which give young people the opportunity to develop workplace skills and experience; putting them in a better position to compete for future vacancies/opportunities.

119. Traineeship opportunities can last from 6 weeks and up to 6 months; they will be flexible in nature.

120. In most cases, Traineeships will contain 3 core elements:

- Work preparation training
- English & Maths -up to GCSE or equivalent Level 2, where the claimant does not already hold a qualification at this level (or at A level or equivalent level 3 for 16-18 year olds); and
- Work Experience placement up to 30 hours per week, up to a maximum of 8 consecutive weeks (for JSA claimants- this can be extended to 12 weeks, if an Apprenticeship opportunity becomes available).

121. Providers have been advised that they need to share attendance information with Jobcentres.

Traineeships- Considerations whilst designing Traineeship delivery models

122. Existing benefit rules apply.

123. Traineeships and delivery models should be designed locally with Training providers to ensure that claimants can participate whilst keeping their existing benefit.

124. Traineeships involve approximately 30 hours a week in total of activity, consisting of a training element (likely to be under 16 hours per week) and the remainder as work experience placement.

125. The hours spent on training and work experience respectively may change from week to week, to meet the needs of the claimant and the employer.

126. English and Maths qualifications do not have to be completed within the period of the Traineeship; these can continue until the claimant has successfully achieved the required levels.

127. Claimants remain subject to existing benefit conditionality throughout all elements of the Traineeship.

Young People and approved training

128. Existing benefit rules apply in respect of Young People on non advanced education and approved training.

129. Traineeships is legally classed as non advanced education.

130. For further information on types of courses which are classed as approved training, please visit <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/childbenefit/keep-up-to-date/when-child-aged-16/further-education.htm>

131. Claimants who are moved onto IS under severe hardship rules are still eligible to participate in Traineeships, as they will have been in receipt of JSA at the point of referral.

Traineeships-Training Allowance

132. Training Allowance will only be a consideration for JSA claimants where a district agrees a delivery model which incorporates a training element which exceeds 16 hours a week.

133. Where districts agree to support a claimant via a Training Allowance, existing processes apply.

134. Training Allowances will be paid out of existing Flexible Support Fund budgets at district manager discretion. There is no additional funding to support payment of training allowance or support costs.

Traineeships-Registering opportunities on LMS and the District Provision Tool (DPT)

135. Traineeship opportunities should be set up under the Traineeship Opportunity type on LMS.

136. The District Provision Tool should be updated accordingly by the district DPT Publisher; Traineeships can be found via the relevant DPT A to Z or directly on the Sectors menu.

137. Traineeships are voluntary opportunities. Skills Conditionality does not apply.

Traineeships-Travel, Childcare and Replacement Care costs

Traineeships-Training element

138. Support costs should be funded by Traineeship providers via the Bursary Fund for 16-19 year olds and the Discretionary Learner Support arrangements for 19-23 year olds.

139. DWP should only consider funding support Travel, Childcare and Replacement Care costs out of existing Flexible Support Fund (FSF) budgets where the training provider will not pay the costs.

140. As all FSF expenditure is at District discretion, all requests for funding must be approved prior to payment as per existing arrangements.

141. Existing process applies for the payment of costs.

142. There is no indication that providers will not pay to cover expenses. Mechanisms and funding are available which allow them to do this.

Traineeships-Work Experience placement element

143. Employers are not required to pay young people for the work experience placement of a Traineeship as they are exempt from the National Minimum Wage.

144. Employers are encouraged to support with costs, for example reimbursing travel fares.

145. Existing benefit rules apply in respect of income should a provider provide the claimant with financial help.

146. Where employers do not provide help with costs, providers should cover any expenditure via the Bursary Fund for 16-19 year olds and the Discretionary Learner Support arrangements for 19-23 year olds.

147. DWP should only consider funding support Travel, Childcare and Replacement Care costs out of existing Flexible Support Fund (FSF) budgets where the training provider will not pay the costs.

148. As all FSF expenditure is at District discretion, all requests for funding must be approved prior to payment as per existing arrangements.

149. Existing process applies for the payment of costs.

150. There is no indication that providers will not pay to cover expenses. Mechanisms and funding are available which allow them to do this.

Traineeships-Funding

151. The following funding arrangements apply to Traineeships:

- Participation on a Traineeship by 16-18 year olds will be funded in the same way as other Study Programmes for young people, in line with the Education Funding Agency funding guidance
- For all those aged 19 and above, Traineeships will be fully funded for learners via the Adult Skills Budget (ASB), administered by the Skills Funding Agency
- Traineeships will be funded on the basis of the published matrix rate for any accredited units and qualifications delivered as part of the traineeship, in addition to funding for the organisation of the work placement

- BIS will develop and add a new component to the ASB so that providers can be funded to deliver the work placement element within traineeships
- The anticipated overall level of funding available for traineeships for 19-23 year olds to be similar to that for 16-19 year olds
- As with other programmes, providers will record young people taking part in and completing traineeships through the Individualised Learner Record (ILR)
- Employers are not required to pay young people for the work placement under the traineeship. Traineeships fall under an exemption to the National Minimum Wage
- Young people participating in Traineeships will be able to access existing Skills Funding Agency avenues of financial support, where they qualify. This includes the £180 million 16-19 Bursary Fund and Discretionary Learner Support arrangements for 19-23 year olds.

Traineeships-Data Sharing/Informed Consent

152. Providers have responsibility for obtaining participant informed consent to share with Employers for the duration of the Traineeship.

153. DWP are not required to gather informed consent.

154. Existing data sharing arrangements apply between DWP and Providers.

Traineeships-Further information

155. A Traineeships Fact sheet & Eligibility checker has been produced by the SFA, and may be a useful reference tool.

156. For Additional information, visit the Traineeship section of the Skills Funding Agency's website.

157. The Q&A document may answer any further questions.

JSA Full Time Training Flexibility

158. Claimants who have been claiming Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) for six months or more and are referred to full-time training of up to and including 30 hours per week can remain on JSA rather than transferring to a training allowance as long as the provision duration is a maximum of eight weeks.

159. Whilst on training, claimants are required to take steps to find employment and remain engaged with the labour market, by following written notifications issued under the Schemes for Assisting Persons to Obtain Employment (SAPOE) regulations.

160. For further information please refer to the Skills Guide.

Payment of Travel & Childcare Payments

161. Mandated claimants attending National Careers Service, Initial Provider Interviews, or provision on a full or part-time basis must be offered help with their travel, childcare and replacement care costs.

162. These payments are made from the Flexible Support Fund.

163. Signposted claimants may receive help with costs at District Manager's discretion.

164. Where providers agree to pay and reclaim expenses from Jobcentre Plus a Service Level Agreement must be in place with that provider.

Provider Contact Management Arrangements

165. The new offer provides Jobcentre Plus with greater opportunity to shape local provision.

166. Districts should build relationships with colleges and training organisations to create the balance and mix of provision required.

167. Where a district does not feel enough suitable provision is available, they should contact the Agency, who can provide details of colleges and training organisation working in their area.

Issue Resolution and Escalation Process

168. The providers' quality is independently monitored by Ofsted, and inspection outcomes are published.

169. If a district is concerned about this or they become aware that the provider may cease trading they should raise this with the Agency directly.

170. A Communication and Responsiveness Process has been developed by the Agency, which should be followed when raising issues.

171. In the event that a resolution cannot be reached, districts are free to select a different supplier.

Operational Data Sharing for Skills - England

172. Regulations are in place, which allow the Secretary of State to share information about claimants in relation to employment, skills and training with Agency funded colleges, training organisations, National Careers Service or any other body the Chief Executive of the Agency contracts with for the delivery of the Skills Offer for Jobcentre Plus claimants, where this information is necessary to effectively administer their training and benefits.

173. Only those items of information that are listed in the Operational data share data list can be exchanged without breaching the Data Protection Act 1998.

174. Claimant consent is not required for this information.

175. Please note that information on criminal records; health details and other sensitive personal information are not listed in the Operational data share data list so informed consent is still required to pass on this information. See Operational Data Sharing for Skills for further guidance.

176. These regulations remove the need to obtain informed consent for every claimant every time non-sensitive personal information needs to be shared between Jobcentre Plus, and providers as mentioned above.

177. These arrangements do not extend to non Skills Funding Agency providers. Existing data security requirements for transferring information continue to apply.

178. It is for individual colleges and training organisations to decide how they will respond to this change in JCP procedures.

179. The Agency cannot direct colleges and training organisations in this respect as each individual college or training organisation will need to take their own advice on whether or not the legal framework is in place.

Retention of Skills Conditionality Forms

180. Skills Conditionality forms should be retained in line with JSA and ESA retention periods.

181. For further information, please see the Specific Guidance Section of the Benefits Document and Data Retention Guide (DDRG).

LMS Opportunities

182. The suite of opportunity types on LMS supports referrals to National Careers Service, Skills Funding Agency Provider Initial Interview and Skills Funding Agency provision.

183. The same opportunities should be used irrespective of whether the claimant is attending on a full or part time basis, and irrespective of whether they are claiming JSA or ESA (WRAG).

184. Opportunities created to support referrals must be annotated to show:

- All referrals under Skills Conditionality are mandatory
- Whether Skills Conditionality applies
- Age eligibility, e.g. 18+ or 19+ (see paragraph 13 and 16)
- Help with travel, childcare and replacement care costs is available; and
- Claimant informed consent is not required.

185. For data sharing see the Skills Guide.

Note: for any PET delivered by Agency colleagues and training organisations providers as part of sector based work academies; a new set of sbwa opportunity types are available. The above opportunities must not be used for sbwa PET referrals.

Non-Mandatory Skills Provision

186. For Agency colleges and training organisations who do **not** wish to accept mandated referrals, or other non Agency providers who still require a formal non mandatory referral rather than a signpost, refer to:

- “Other Training” opportunity.

Training Type	Opportunity Type
• Initial Provider Interview	Skills Cond –Initial Provider Interview
• National Careers Service Interview	Skills Health Check
• Basic Skills	Skills Cond –Basic Skills Trng
• ESOL	Skills Cond –ESOL
• SFA Occupational Training	Skills Cond –Occupational Training
• SFA provider who does not wish to take mandated claimants; • Non SFA Basic Skills; • Non SFA ESOL; • Non SFA Occupational Training.	Other Training

Note: For any PET delivered by Agency colleges and training organisations providers as part of sector-based work academies a new set of sbwa opportunity types is available. The above opportunities must not be used for sbwa PET referrals.

Non-JSA/ESA WRAG Claimants

187. Claimants of other benefits (non JSA/ESA WRAG) can be referred to Skills Funding Agency provision.

188. The same LMS opportunity types should be used.

189. The referral will be non mandatory and Skills Conditionality does not apply.

District Provision Tool

190. Districts must communicate which opportunities are relevant to each claimant group and that the District Provision Tool (DPT) is updated.

191. The process for submitting updates to the DPT publishers differ in each District, please check local arrangements. DPT Publishers should refer to the DPT Publishing Guidance.

192. Skills opportunities on LMS and the DPT should be annotated to show provision age, eligibility and whether skills conditionality applies.

Ongoing Evaluation of Training Provision

193. Districts must maintain their relationship with colleges and training organisations to ensure that provision continues to meet both employer and claimants' requirements.

194. Where it is identified that planned training will not meet the local labour market conditions, Districts should follow the Issues Communication and Responsiveness Process.