UK Government

Apprenticeship funding rules

August 2026 to July 2027

July 2026

Version 3

Contents

Introduction and purpose of the document

New for 1 August 2026

2 **Clarification:** We have clarified the position of this draft rules document and confirmed that we will issue an updated version of this document to confirm the final funding rules in May.

5 **Clarification:** We have clarified that we may make changes to these rules at any time and that this includes changes to funding and the products available under the growth and skills levy.

- **Clarification:** We have clarified the language and definitions in this section following the Machinery of Government change to transfer responsibility for apprenticeships from the Department for Education (DfE) to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

- **Update:** We have removed the reference to Annex C. The minimum volume of off-the-job training for each standard can now be found on the Skills England website (on each standard).

13 **Policy update:** We have included reference to the funding rules for the delivery of apprenticeship units which started in April 2026.

- **Policy update:** We have removed reference to the funding rules for the Growth Pilot which ended in March 2026.

15 **Policy update:** We have updated definitions throughout the document to refer to the growth and skills levy.

26 **Clarification:** We use the term end-point assessment to refer to assessment arrangements for existing versions of standards that have not yet had their assessment plans revised under the apprenticeship assessment reforms.

New for 1 August 2026 - Version 1

2 **Update:** We have removed reference to the draft rules document.

9 **Update:** We have included reference to apprenticeship hiring payments for non-levy employers.

New for 1 August 2026 – Version 2

4.3 **Update:** We have included reference to the Funds in an employer's apprenticeship service account section (paragraph 190).

1. This document sets out the rules for:

    1.1. Main providers and employer-providers receiving funding for delivering apprenticeship training in England; and

    1.2. All employers of apprentices who are accessing funding for apprenticeships in England.

2. These funding rules will apply to all apprenticeships starting on or after 1 August 2026.

3. Any apprenticeship which started before 1 August 2026 will continue to follow the rules applicable at that time (subject to the exceptions detailed in paragraph 4). These can be accessed on GOV.UK.

4. The rules detailed below apply irrespective of the apprentice's start date and will include existing learners who started their programme in previous funding years:

    4.1. Redundancy (paragraphs 312 to 316);

    4.2. Changing to a new version of a standard (paragraphs 327 to 343 and 397 to 415); and

    4.3. Funds in an employer's apprenticeship service account (paragraph 190)

5. We may make changes to these rules at any time, including changes to funding and the products available under the growth and skills levy.

6. These rules form part of the terms and conditions for the use of funds in an employer's apprenticeship service account or for government-employer co-investment.

7. Main providers and employer-providers must operate within the terms and conditions of their Department for Education Apprenticeships - Provider Agreement (Provider Agreement) with the Secretary of State for Education and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which includes these funding rules and the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) technical documents, guidance and requirements. If they do not, they will be in breach of their Provider Agreement.

8. Employers accessing funding through the apprenticeship service must operate within the terms and conditions of their Department for Education Apprenticeships - Employer Agreement (Employer Agreement) with the Secretary of State for Education and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions which includes these rules. If they do not, they will be in breach of their Employer Agreement.

9. We reserve the right to take action where a provider breaches their Provider Agreement, or an employer breaches their Employer Agreement or where either

party breaches the funding rules. This includes the recovery of all or part of the government funding if we are satisfied that there has been a breach of the funding rules or agreements. This includes where claims are made for funding through an employer's apprenticeship service account, government co-investment, additional payments or apprenticeship hiring payments for non-levy employers to which the provider and / or the employer are not entitled.

10. In addition to the terms and conditions set out in the Provider and Employer Agreements, these rules detail the minimum requirements organisations must meet to receive funding from us. Other relevant sector bodies (e.g. Ofsted) may prescribe further requirements and / or examples of best practice.

11. Those providers and employers that are delivering apprenticeship standards where the assessment plan has been revised under the new apprenticeship principles must refer to Annex B of these rules.

12. Those employers and providers taking part in the portable flexi-job apprenticeships pilot must also refer to the supplemental funding rules for this pilot. We will provide these rules to those who join the pilot.

13. Those employers and providers delivering apprenticeship units must also follow the relevant funding rules. These are available on GOV.UK.

14. More information on privately funded apprenticeships can be found on GOV.UK.

Definitions

15. We use the term 'growth and skills levy' throughout this document to refer to the apprenticeship levy which the government is transforming into a new growth and skills levy which will deliver greater flexibility to employers, more opportunities for young people and support the industrial strategy.

16. We use the term 'main provider' where the funding rule only applies to an organisation that is listed on the main provider route of the Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR).

17. We use the term 'employer-provider' where the funding rule only applies to a levy-paying organisation that is listed on the employer-provider route of the APAR. Employer-providers can only deliver apprenticeship training to their own staff or those of a connected company or charity and must do so on an actual cost basis (see paragraph 124).

18. We use the term 'provider' where the funding rule applies equally to organisations on the main provider or the employer-provider route of the APAR.

19. In all three cases, where we use the term main provider, employer-provider or provider this organisation will:

    19.1. Hold a funding agreement with us through which we will directly route funds from an employer's apprenticeship service account or government-employer co-investment;

    19.2. Hold the overall responsibility for the training conducted by themselves and their delivery subcontractors; and

    19.3. Hold the contractual relationship for the end-point assessment of the apprentice.

20. Main providers delivering to their own staff must follow the specific rule for employer-providers and only claim actual costs (see paragraph 124).

21. We use the term 'subcontractor' to mean an organisation or an individual (not an employee) that is contracted by a provider for the delivery of training as part of the employer's agreed apprenticeship programme. A subcontractor must be on the main provider, the employer-provider or the supporting provider route of the APAR, unless one of the exceptions applies (see paragraph 262). A subcontractor will not be in direct receipt of funds but will receive these through the organisation that has contracted with them (also see glossary definition).

22. We use the term 'employer' to mean an organisation that has a contract of service and an apprenticeship agreement with an apprentice. This can include:

    22.1. Employer-providers and Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agencies (FJAAs);

    22.2. Companies or charities whose PAYE scheme the employer has connected to their apprenticeship service account in accordance with HMRC's definition of connected companies and charities.

23. The term 'employer' also includes the organisation acting as the employer of alternative English apprentices (see paragraphs 73 to 74).

24. All references to an 'employer' are in relation to the whole organisation and not to individual sites or locations. Whilst the apprentice must have a separate identifiable line manager who is undertaking the role of the 'employer', it is a matter for the organisation employing the apprentice as to who should sign the documentation associated with the apprenticeship.

25. We use the terms 'we', 'our' and 'us' to refer to the Department for Education or the Department for Work and Pensions as may be applicable.

26. We use the term ‘end-point assessment’ to refer to assessment arrangements for existing versions of standards that have not yet had their assessment plans revised under the apprenticeship assessment reforms.

Initial assessment

Overview

27. The provider must ensure that both the learner and programme are eligible for funding by conducting an initial assessment. We do not specify which assessment tools must be used; this is for the provider to determine. The initial assessment must include an assessment of:

    27.1. Learner eligibility (see paragraphs 29 to 34);

    27.2. Recognition of prior learning and experience (see paragraphs 35 to 39);

    27.3. Learning support (see paragraphs 40 to 46); and

    27.4. English and maths support (see paragraphs 47 to 62).

28. The provider must also discuss or agree (as directed) the areas listed in paragraphs 64 to 66 before accessing apprenticeship funding.

Learner eligibility

New for 1 August 2026

30.5 **Policy update:** We have removed reference to the need for all of the working hours in the apprenticeship to be known in advance in order to meet the requirement that 50% of working hours need to take place in England.

33 **Policy update:** Apprentices starting the Level 2 Administration Assistant apprenticeship standard (ST1472) will only be eligible for funding, if, at the start of the apprenticeship, they are aged between 16 and 24-years-old (or 15 years of age if the apprentice's 16th birthday is between the last Friday of June and 31 August).

34.5 **Clarification:** We have clarified that individuals undertaking a government funded Skills Bootcamp are not eligible for apprenticeship funding.

- **Clarification:** We have clarified the evidence requirements around visas and ordinary residency.

New for 1 August 2026 - Version 1

- **Clarification**: We have clarified the evidence requirements around the rule regarding 50% of working hours taking place in England.

New for 1 August 2026 - Version 2

34.6.4 **Correction:** We have added this line back in following it being omitted from the previous version.

- **Clarification:** We have further clarified the evidence requirements around the rule regarding 50% of working hours taking place in England.

Individuals who are eligible for funding

29. The provider must check the eligibility of the individual for apprenticeship funding at the start of their apprenticeship.

    29.1. A provider must only claim funding for an individual who meets the residency eligibility criteria set out in Annex A of this document.

    29.2. We will use the age of the apprentice on the day they start their apprenticeship training (the learning start date within the ILR) for all age-based eligibility criteria for that apprenticeship.

29.3. An apprentice's eligibility for funding will not change during the apprenticeship unless their employment status also changes (e.g. they become unemployed). If an apprentice is made redundant, we may continue to fund their training, even if they cannot find another employer (see paragraphs 312 to 316). Where the apprentice's employment or apprenticeship agreement ends for reasons other than redundancy, please see paragraph 306.

29.4. A provider must reassess an individual's eligibility for any new apprenticeship.

30. To access funds in the employer's apprenticeship service account or government-employer co-investment, the provider must ensure that the individual:

30.1. Starts their apprenticeship after the last Friday in June of the school academic year (September to August) in which they have their 16th birthday.

30.2. Is able to complete the apprenticeship within the time they have available, including end-point assessment. If the provider knows an individual is unable to complete the apprenticeship in the time they have available, (e.g. because their visa will expire or because they have a fixed term contract which is shorter than the duration of the apprenticeship), they must not be funded.

30.3. Does not use a student loan to pay for their apprenticeship. Where an individual transfers to an apprenticeship from a full-time further education or higher education course, and that course has been funded by a student loan, the loan must be terminated by the individual and the provider must be satisfied that this has occurred.

30.4. Does not benefit from direct or indirect funding for any part of their apprenticeship that duplicates training or assessment that they have received from any other source.

30.5. Spends at least 50% of their working hours in England over the duration of the apprenticeship. This also applies to remote and hybrid workers. See Annex A (paragraph 374.6) for exceptions to this rule.

30.5.1 The provider must make separate arrangements with the relevant devolved administration for those who do not meet this rule.

31. An employer must only use funds from their apprenticeship service account or government-employer co-investment for apprentices employed by them or a

connected company or charity as defined by HMRC. This also applies where the apprentice is funded by a transfer of funds from another employer.

31.1. As an exception to paragraph 31, employers who operate pooled PAYE schemes may use funds from their apprenticeship service account or government-employer co-investment for apprentices employed by an organisation within their pooled PAYE scheme.

32. Apprentices starting a Level 7 apprenticeship standard will only be eligible for funding if, at the start of the apprenticeship training, they are:

32.1. Aged between 16 and 21 years old (or 15 years of age if the apprentice's 16th birthday is between the last Friday of June and 31 August); or

32.2. Aged between 22 and 24 years old and have either an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan provided by their local authority and / or have been, or are, in the care of their local authority as defined in paragraph 127.3.

33. Apprentices starting the Level 2 Administration Assistant apprenticeship standard (ST1472) will only be eligible for funding if, at the start of the apprenticeship training, they are aged between 16 and 24 years old (or 15 years of age if the apprentice's 16th birthday is between the last Friday of June and 31 August).

Individuals who are not eligible for funding

34. A provider must not claim funding for individuals who:

34.1. Are self-employed as a sole trader;

34.2. Are working under IR35 (see glossary definition) unless they meet one of the alternative English apprenticeship arrangements (see paragraphs 73 to 74);

34.3. Are a shareholder, director or person of significant control, with no separate identifiable line manager to undertake the role of 'employer' as defined by these funding rules;

34.3.1 During the apprenticeship, if an apprentice becomes self-employed as a sole trader, or becomes a shareholder, director or person of significant control, with no separate identifiable line manager, they will no longer be eligible for funding and the provider must report them as having withdrawn.

34.4. Are undertaking another apprenticeship or apprenticeship unit.

34.5. Are undertaking a skills bootcamp funded by government.

34.6. Are undertaking training funded through the Adult Skills Fund (ASF) or funded by authorities who have had skills funding devolved (or delegated in the case of the Greater London Authority) to them, where that training will:

34.6.1 Replicate vocational and other learning aims covered by the apprenticeship, including English and / or maths;

34.6.2 Offer career related training that conflicts with the apprenticeship aims; or

34.6.3 Take place during working hours. Where an apprentice has more than one job, working hours refers to the hours of the job the apprenticeship is linked to.

34.6.4 As an exception to paragraph 34.6 an individual may commence an apprenticeship and attract funding where they have less than four weeks to completion of an existing DfE funded course.

34.7. Are in receipt of any other direct / indirect DfE funding during their apprenticeship; this includes any other DfE funded FE / HE programme, including those funded by the Office for Students or who are in receipt of student finance, but excludes funding outlined in paragraph 34.6 and apprentices taking part in the Turing Scheme (or the Erasmus+ programme from 2027); or

34.8. Are undertaking any part of an apprenticeship whilst on a sandwich placement as part of a degree.

Evidence requirements

The provider must retain evidence of an individual's eligibility, including:

- Confirmation that they have seen the learner's identity documents and / or immigration status / permissions to verify the have enough time to complete the apprenticeship (including assessment).
- Confirmation that the provider has checked the learner's ordinary residency status and that it is in line with Annex A.
- Confirmation of the apprentice's date of birth.
- Evidence that the apprentice will spend at least 50% of their working hours in England over the duration of the apprenticeship (or that they meet one of the exemptions set out in Annex A). In exceptional cases, where the employer is unable to confirm the apprentice's exact working locations at the start of the programme but can confirm that the apprentice will spend at least 50% of their working hours in England over the duration of the apprenticeship, a written statement from the employer confirming this must be obtained. Where the business footprint is larger than England this could include a roster for a typical month for the apprentice along with written confirmation from the employer.
- Evidence to confirm that the apprentice is employed by that employer, or a connected company or charity and this employment covers the full period of the apprenticeship, including the assessment. This can be a relevant extract from a contract of employment or a signed declaration by the employer.
- Confirmation that the apprentice is not enrolled on any other programme as detailed in paragraphs 34.4 to 34.8.

The provider must confirm the type of evidence they have seen to satisfy that the apprentice meets all eligibility criteria. Where this evidence needs to come from the apprentice's employer, the employer must give this to the provider.

Recognition of prior learning and experience

New for 1 August 2026

38.2 **Clarification:** A skills scan can also be conducted against a training plan, provided it maps across to the standard's outcomes.

38.3 **Policy update:** The reference to accelerated apprenticeships has been removed; this terminology is no longer used.

- **Policy update:** The reference to progression profiles linked to a Skills Bootcamp has been removed as this product was not developed.

39.2.1 **Clarification:** We have added a list of regulated professions.

Overview

35. To verify an individual's suitability for the standard, and to tailor the training plan, the provider must review their prior learning and experience. Funds must not be used to pay for training which will deliver knowledge, skills and behaviours the apprentice already has; we will take action to recover apprenticeship funding where this happens.

36. Prior learning and experience includes the following:

    36.1. Prior education, training, or qualifications in a related subject sector area, including any previous apprenticeship undertaken; and

    36.2. Learning or competence gained from prior work experience, particularly where the apprentice is an existing employee or is beginning their apprenticeship after completing another programme with a relevant work placement.

    36.3. Further information about recognition of prior learning can be found on GOV.UK.

Assessment of prior learning and experience (16–18-year-olds)

37. Prior learning is unlikely to exist for apprentices aged 16-18, unless they have previously enrolled in an apprenticeship or other training that is aligned to Skills England's occupational standards in the same sector (see paragraph 38.3), or they have relevant prior work experience (see paragraph 36.2). However, to establish this, the provider must check the individual's personal learning record (if

they have one) and have a discussion with them about the likelihood of relevant prior learning against the proposed apprenticeship standard.

37.1. Where relevant prior learning and experience is not identified, this should be documented and agreed with the employer. No further actions are required, including any price reduction.

37.2. If relevant prior learning and experience does exist, the provider must follow the rules in paragraphs 38.2 to 38.3 below.

Assessment of prior learning and experience (19+ year-olds)

38. For all apprentices aged 19+ the provider must:

38.1. Check the individual's personal learning record (if they have one) and have a discussion with them about the likelihood of relevant prior learning against the proposed apprenticeship standard.

38.2. Conduct a skills scan against the knowledge, skills and behaviours requirements of the proposed apprenticeship standard or a proposed training plan (which has been mapped across to the standard's outcomes).

38.2.1 If considered relevant by the provider, or required by the standard, the skills scan can be supplemented with additional diagnostic testing of either occupational competence or English and maths prior attainment.

38.3. Take account of the published progression profiles, if the individual has completed a T-Level. These will identify if a subsequent apprenticeship in the same occupational area can be funded, with an adjustment in content and price.

38.4. Where relevant prior learning and experience is not identified, this should be documented and agreed with the employer. No further actions are required, including any price reduction.

Taking account of prior learning and experience (all learners)

39. Where relevant prior learning and experience is identified, the provider must summarise the impact, including whether and by how much, the apprenticeship content and price have been reduced.

39.1. Where content is omitted from the training plan, this must be shown as a volume of off-the-job training hours. The reduction in hours must translate to a reduction in price.

39.1.1 If there is insufficient content remaining (i.e. less than 8 months or 187 hours), the individual will be ineligible for apprenticeship funding.

39.2. Some standards linked to regulated professions may require that prior learning, including experience in the workplace, is formally accredited. Where training needs to be repeated to meet the accreditation requirements of a regulated profession, this is eligible learning; this must be documented as part of the assessment.

39.2.1 A list of regulated professions can be found here. The regulator can provider further advice on whether training must be accredited by them.

39.3. To calculate the reduction in price the provider must:

39.3.1 Calculate the percentage of prior learning that the individual has, as a percentage of the off-the-job training hours that would be delivered to an individual with no relevant prior learning for the same standard. Providers must use their own planned hours which must be at least (but can be higher than) the volume of off-the-job training hours published on the standard as the starting point for the calculation (see paragraph 85).

For example, if the individual's prior learning accounts for 300 off-the-job training hours and typically, for the same standard, the provider would usually plan to deliver 1,000 hours to an individual with no prior learning, this would equate to a 30% prior learning percentage. Further examples can be found in the RPL guidance (see paragraph 36.3).

39.3.2 Reduce the total price by at least 50% of the prior learning percentage, from the funding band maximum (the 50% reduction recognises that there are some fixed costs in the apprenticeship).

For example, if the apprentice has 30% prior learning, this means there must be a reduction in the total price of at least 15% from the funding band maximum (e.g. £1,500 price reduction if the funding band maximum is £10,000). This reduced price (i.e. £8,500) is the maximum that will be paid using apprenticeship funding (i.e. £8,500 for a £10,000 funding band where there has been a 15% price reduction).

39.3.3 This new maximum funding amount (i.e. £8,500) becomes the starting point for any further price negotiation with the employer (e.g. if the apprentice is part of a large cohort).

39.3.4 The final price must be split between fields TNP1 (training) and TNP2 (end-point assessment) in the ILR.

Evidence requirements

For all learners the provider has:

- Discussed with the learner the likelihood of relevant prior learning against the proposed apprenticeship standard.

- Checked the learners personal learning record. If this information is unavailable, or the learner is unable to provide evidence of prior attainment please refer to get a replacement exam certificate on GOV.UK. Evidence of proof of equivalency from UK ENIC can be used where an individual has an international qualification.

For learners aged 19+ (and those aged 16-18 years if appropriate) the provider has:

- Conducted a skills scan against the requirements of the proposed apprenticeship standard and, where relevant, supplemented this with additional diagnostic testing.

- Has used the published progression profiles (if relevant).

Where relevant prior learning and experience does not exist, the provider has recorded this (e.g. on the training plan). This has been agreed with the employer.

Where relevant prior learning and experience does exist, this has been agreed with the employer and the provider has:

- Summarised the impact, including whether and by how much the apprenticeship content and price have been reduced and confirmed that the resulting apprenticeship meets the funding rules in relation to the minimum duration and off-the-job training. Where content is to be omitted from the training plan, this has been shown as a volume of off-the-job training hours.

- Where the standard is linked to a regulated profession, and this impacts the reduction, this has been documented.

- Calculated the reduction in price by following the example set out in paragraph 39.3 and has split the outcome over fields TNP1 and TNP2 in the ILR.

Apprentices who need access to learning support

New for 1 August 2026

44.5 **Clarification:** To confirm that where the learning support need is stable, due to a permanent disability, and this is unlikely to change, then reviews may be light-touch.

Definitions

40. Learning support funding is available to meet the costs (incurred by a provider) of putting in place reasonable adjustments, as set out in section 20 of the Equality Act 2010. This is for an apprentice who:

    40.1. Has a disability or a learning difficulty (as defined in Section 15ZA(6) of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by section 41 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009)), who, as a result of this learning difficulty or disability, requires reasonable adjustments in order to be able to complete their apprenticeship, including any reasonable adjustments to complete English and / or maths requirements (this includes where apprentices have opted-in – see paragraph 50) and end-point assessment.

41. For the purposes of this section, and as defined in Section 15ZA(6) of the Education Act 1996, a person has a learning difficulty (or disability) if (a) the person has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of persons of the same age, or (b) the person has a disability which either prevents or hinders the person from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided by institutions providing education or training for persons who are over compulsory school age.

42. In relation to paragraphs 40 to 41, this can include an apprentice who has not previously had a learning difficulty or disability identified, but in relation to whom the provider has identified a disability or learning difficulty (as defined in Section 15ZA(6) of the Education Act 1996) that would directly affect the apprentice's ability to complete their apprenticeship.

Assessment for learning support funding

43. As part of the initial assessment, the provider must undertake a screening exercise for learning support.

    43.1. Where this assessment identifies potential learning difficulties or disabilities, and before a claim for learning support funding can be made, the provider may need to undertake a further detailed assessment to identify whether an apprentice has a learning difficulty or disability that directly impacts their ability to complete the apprenticeship on which they are enrolled.

43.1.1 This further detailed assessment is not eligible for funding.

43.1.2 A detailed assessment can take place at any point during the apprenticeship (see paragraph 103.5). However, claims for learning support can only be made from the date that evidence is acquired.

43.1.3 The provider must refer to the evidence requirements below to ensure they meet the requirements for claiming.

43.1.4 More information on how to assess the needs of the individual and collect evidence can be found within this guidance on GOV.UK.

43.2. A learning difficulty or disability that does not require reasonable adjustments or cannot be evidenced as directly impacting on the apprentice's ability to complete their apprenticeship will not be eligible for learning support funding. Learning support is not available:

43.2.1 To deal with everyday difficulties, including learning difficulties as defined in Section 15ZA(7) of the Education Act 1996, that are not directly associated with the apprenticeship. If an apprentice needs help at work, they may be able to get help from Access to Work;

43.2.2 To address any learning gaps in an apprentice's prior knowledge, skills, or behaviours where these are relevant to their apprenticeship, but where there is no identified learning difficulty or disability in respect of obtaining this learning (see paragraphs 40 to 41); or

43.2.3 Where there are no costs incurred in putting in place reasonable adjustments.

Claiming learning support funding

44. The provider can only claim learning support funding for each month in which reasonable adjustments are provided to the apprentice and where evidence of costs can be provided. For months in which no reasonable adjustments are necessary, or no costs have been incurred, a claim for learning support funding must not be made.

44.1. Learning support funding is fixed at a monthly rate of £150.

44.2. This will be paid, to the provider, in the months in which reasonable adjustments are necessary and delivered, where they are evidenced and where this has been reported in the ILR.

44.2.1 Learning support funding is not deducted from the employer's apprenticeship service account, nor does it require employer co-investment.

44.3. If the cost exceeds £150 per month, but is less than £19,000 per annum, the provider can claim the additional costs via the earnings adjustment statement (EAS). Further information on the EAS can be found on GOV.UK.

44.3.1 Where one-off costs exceed £150 in a given month, the additional amount should be claimed via EAS (alongside the monthly fixed amount).

44.4. The monthly payment cannot be used to pay for the further detailed assessment, as this is not eligible for funding (see paragraph 43.1.1).

44.5. Ongoing delivery and the need for learning support must be reviewed at least every 3 calendar months. Where the learning support need is stable, due to a permanent disability, and is unlikely to change during the apprenticeship, the review may be light-touch.

44.5.1 Where the review determines that learning support funding is no longer needed, providers must immediately stop claiming these payments from the date learning support ceased by updating the ILR as appropriate.

44.5.2 Where an apprentice has given consent for their employer to be aware of their learning support requirements this review can be part of the progress review discussions.

45. The provider must promptly claim for learning support funding through the ILR and the EAS. We will not pay for claims from a previous funding year if claims are not made on time. The deadline for claiming is the last ILR collection for each funding year.

Apprentices who need access to exceptional learning support (ELS)

46. An apprentice who requires substantial reasonable adjustments to start or continue learning can get access to exceptional learning support if the cost of these reasonable adjustments exceeds £19,000 in a funding year. The provider

must submit ELS claims to us at the beginning of the apprenticeship, or when it is identified that the apprentice requires support costing more than £19,000 in the funding year.

46.1. The provider must complete and send the ELS claim form to us so that we can authorise the request. The exceptional learning support cost form can be accessed on GOV.UK.

Evidence requirements

- Where the provider has identified a learning difficulty or disability, they must (1) evidence that an assessment has been carried out and hold a copy of the assessment results which identifies the apprentice's learning difficulty or disability; (2) evidence details of the reasonable adjustments that are necessary to enable the apprentice to complete the apprenticeship on which they are enrolled; and (3) include a description of how progress towards the completion of the apprenticeship would be directly impacted if the reasonable adjustments listed were not put in place for the apprentice.

- The provider has documented evidence of how they plan to deliver the necessary reasonable adjustments throughout the apprenticeship. This plan has been agreed and signed-off by the apprentice, prior to a claim for learning support funding being made and, where the apprentice has given consent, this information has been shared with their employer.

- For the months where learning support funding is claimed, the provider has evidence and documented details of the necessary reasonable adjustments that have been delivered in that period. Learning support funding will only be paid in months where the reasonable adjustments are required and are being delivered. Where costs exceed £150 per month the provider must provide invoices to evidence the actual costs incurred (claimed via the Earnings Adjustment Statement).

- The provider has documented evidence of reviews being undertaken, at least every 3 calendar months, throughout the apprenticeship to ensure that reasonable adjustments are still necessary and appropriate (for the apprenticeship). This evidence confirms the effectiveness of the reasonable adjustments and how these have been adapted where necessary – evidence should also confirm the month(s), where claims have been made, are accurate. Where amendments to the original plan are required, these will need to be documented, signed-off by the apprentice and evidenced accordingly.

Evidence requirements (continued)

- Where exceptional learning support (ELS) is claimed for an apprentice, the provider has the application and supporting evidence for this claim. This includes details of the reasonable adjustments and the actual costs incurred.

Support for English and maths training

New for 1 August 2026

47 **Clarification:** We have clarified that the provider must establish whether the apprentice will study towards a standalone English and / or maths qualification as part of their apprenticeship at the initial assessment stage.

47.2 **Clarification:** We have clarified that where English and / or maths is an essential component of any mandatory qualification it must be completed as part of the apprenticeship. The awarding organisation can advise further.

49.2 **Clarification:** We have clarified that the provider is responsible for ensuring that active learning for English and / or maths is taking place in line with the signed training plan using an accurate start and end date of delivery.

49.3 **Clarification:** We have clarified that English and / or maths training must not be fully delivered by self-directed distance learning.

50.2 **Clarification:** We have clarified that if a 19+ apprentice withdraws from English and / or maths after opting-in, the provider must withdraw them to the last day of learning.

52.2 **Clarification:** We have clarified how the initial assessment must determine the level at which apprentices should start English and / or maths at.

54.2.1 **Clarification:** We have clarified the requirement for English and / or maths for those apprentices who already hold an approved level 1 in English and / or maths.

57.2 **Clarification:** We have clarified that apprentices may use their statutory entitlement to study English and / or maths under the adult skills fund budget, whilst being on an apprenticeship.

60	**Clarification:** We have clarified that the provider must support apprentices who are exempt from regular English and / or maths to develop their English and / or maths skills, which could be done through material from level 1 or level 2 English and / or maths courses.

Overview

47. At the initial assessment stage, the provider must establish whether the apprentice will study towards a standalone English and / or maths qualification as part of their apprenticeship.

47.1. If the apprentice is 16-18 when they begin their apprenticeship training, and they do not already hold a suitable equivalent qualification (see paragraph 47.3), English and / or maths is a mandatory part of the programme. We will fund the apprentice to achieve up to an approved level 2 qualification in English and / or maths (please see paragraphs 52 and 53 which set out the relevant exit requirements for each apprenticeship level).

47.2. If the apprentice is 19+ when they begin their apprenticeship training, and they do not already hold a suitable equivalent qualification (see paragraph 47.3), English and / or maths is an optional part of the programme. We will fund the apprentice to study towards up to an approved level 2 qualification in English and / or maths, if their employer agrees for them to complete it as part of the programme. Providers must make apprentices fully aware that we will still fund them to study towards English and / or maths where their employer agrees that it should be part of the training plan.

47.2.1 Note that in exceptional circumstances, if English and / or maths is an essential component of any mandatory qualification and forms part of the apprenticeship gateway requirement, it must be completed and evidenced as part of gateway requirements. Please refer to the awarding organisation to confirm.

47.3. Acceptable equivalents are set out in a published list on GOV.UK.

47.4. If an apprentice is a restart onto the same apprenticeship programme, they will be subject to the same age-based eligibility criteria as to when they left the programme (see paragraph 29.2).

48. The provider must document the decision made, as part of the initial assessment outcome for all learners.

48.1. If the apprentice, at any age, already holds evidence of a suitable equivalent qualification or where the apprentice is aged 19+ and their employer does not agree for a standalone English and / or maths qualification to be included as part of the programme, there is no mandatory requirement for the provider to carry out any form of assessment at the initial assessment stage.

Delivering English and / or maths

Apprentices aged 16-18 when they begin their apprenticeship training

49. If a 16–18-year-old apprentice needs to achieve a standalone English and / or maths qualification, in order to achieve their apprenticeship, the provider must include this in the training plan, which is signed by the provider, employer and apprentice.

49.1. Providers must not claim for any funding for standalone English and / or maths qualifications until training has commenced.

49.2. The provider is responsible for ensuring that active learning for English and / or maths takes place in line with the signed training plan. This means that the provider must record an accurate start and end date in accordance with the training plan and evidence that delivery took place in line with this. (See paragraph 103.4 (in the progress review section) on updating the training plan).

49.3. English and / or maths training must not be fully delivered by self-directed distance learning, in line with wider off-the-job training delivery requirements (see paragraph 91.1).

49.4. The provider must deliver the necessary amount of training needed in readiness for the assessment(s). The provider must provide written evidence at gateway that the apprentice has achieved the level of English and / or maths required for the apprenticeship (see paragraphs 54 and 55).

Apprentices aged 19+ when they begin their apprenticeship training

50. Where it is agreed, with the employer, that a 19+ apprentice will study towards a standalone English and / or maths qualification, the provider must include this in the training plan, which is signed by the provider, employer and apprentice.

50.1. Providers must not claim for any funding for standalone English and / or maths qualifications until training has commenced.

50.2. The provider is responsible for ensuring that active learning for English and / or maths takes place in line with the signed training plan. This means that the provider must record an accurate start and end date in accordance with the training plan and evidence that delivery took place in line with this. If an apprentice withdraws from English and / or maths after opting-in, the provider must withdraw them to the last day of learning. (See paragraph 103.4 on updating the training plan).

50.3. English and / or maths training must not be fully delivered by self-directed distance learning, in line with wider off-the-job training delivery requirements (see paragraph 91.1).

50.4. The provider must deliver the necessary amount of training needed in readiness for the assessment(s).

50.5. The provider must provide written evidence at gateway that the apprentice has attempted the assessment(s). The apprentice will not be required to achieve English and / or maths in order to achieve the apprenticeship.

51. Unusual retention and withdrawal patterns in English and / or maths provision for apprentices aged 19+ can be considered as a contextual factor in performance reviews under the Apprenticeship Accountability Framework.

Judgement of an apprentice’s current level

52. Where a standalone English and / or maths qualification is being funded as part of the programme, and the apprentice does not present acceptable evidence of previous attainment, the provider must carry out an assessment of their current level.

52.1. The provider must use current assessment tools based on the National Standards for Adult Literacy and Numeracy: Functional Skills: English and Functional Skills: Mathematics.

52.2. The assessment outcome is used to determine the level the apprentice must commence English and / or maths tuition at. The apprentice must commence tuition at the level immediately above the level at which they have been assessed at the start of their apprenticeship. In instances where the apprentice is assessed to be working at level 2 in English and / or maths, they must commence tuition at level 2. This does not remove the requirement to achieve the minimum required level in English and / or maths (see paragraphs 47 to 49).

What we will fund

53. A provider can claim funding for an apprentice who has not previously attained a GCSE grade A* to C (or 9 to 4) in English and / or maths on the day they start the following qualifications:

    53.1. GCSE English language or maths (or both); or

    53.2. Functional Skills English or maths up to level 2 (or both).

54. For level 2 apprenticeships, where a level 2 qualification in English or maths is not required for the apprenticeship and the apprentice does not already hold the acceptable qualifications for their standard, then the provider must adopt the following approach and can claim funding for an apprentice in the following scenarios:

    54.1. Where the apprentice holds neither level 1 (Functional Skills level 1 or GCSE D to G or 3 to 1) nor level 2 (Functional Skills level 2 or GCSE A* to C or 9 to 4) approved qualifications:

        54.1.1 The apprentice must study towards and if aged 16-18, must achieve English and maths qualifications of at least level 1 (Functional Skills level 1 or GCSE grade 3 - 1). Once level 1 (Functional Skills level 1 or GCSE grade 3 - 1) is secured, apprentices must work towards level 2 English and / or maths (Functional Skills level 2 or GCSE 9 - 4) where there is time to make meaningful progress.

        54.1.2 In recognition that a level 2 English and maths is at least two levels above the level of prior attainment, they are not required to attempt the level 2 assessment unless the provider is satisfied they are ready for assessment (for example from mock / practice attempts).

    54.2. Where an apprentice already holds approved level 1 qualifications:

        54.2.1 The apprentice must start, continue to study, and take the assessments for a level 2 English and / or maths (Functional Skills level 2 or GCSE 9 - 4). For apprentices aged 16-18, this must be fulfilled in order for them to pass gateway. Apprentices undertaking English and / or maths qualifications (irrespective of age) should be assessed at level 2 for all three units of the English functional skills and the assessment for maths, although they are not required to pass the assessment(s).

55. For apprentices aged 16-18 undertaking a level 3 or higher apprenticeship, it is a requirement that they hold or achieve an approved level 2 in both subjects before they can successfully complete the apprenticeship. These apprentices must commence tuition at the English and / or maths level immediately above the level at which they have been assessed at the start of their apprenticeship, in instances where this is lower than that required to pass gateway.

55.1. Where an apprentice is aged 19+ at the start of their apprenticeship training and opts-in to English and / or maths, we will fund them to study towards an approved level 2 in both subjects, but they do not need to achieve to pass gateway. These apprentices must commence tuition at the English and / or maths level immediately above the level at which they have been assessed at the start of their apprenticeship.

56. If the apprentice is made redundant, we will continue to fund them to study English and / or maths up to and including level 2.

57. The provider must not claim funding from any other DfE and / or DWP funding, including the adult skills fund (or equivalent in a strategic authority area) for English and / or maths qualifications that are being funded by the apprenticeships budget.

57.1. Where an apprentice is aged 19+ at the start of their apprenticeship training and their employer agrees that English and / or maths should be delivered as part of their training plan, the provider is responsible for delivering this training, or where agreed, using a subcontractor. Providers must not claim for any other DfE and / or DWP funding to deliver English and / or maths, or place learners on a break in learning to claim for other DfE and / or DWP funding to deliver English and / or maths.

57.2. Where an employer does not agree for their apprentice who is aged 19+ at the start of their apprenticeship training to study English and / or maths, the apprentice may choose to exercise their statutory entitlement to study up to an approved level 2 in English and / or maths. In this circumstance only, the apprentice can seek funding through the adult skills fund to study English and / or maths in their own time, separate to the apprenticeship.

Exceptions to the regular English and maths minimum requirements, for people with special educational needs, learning difficulties or disabilities

58. Where an apprentice has a learning difficulty or disability which is a barrier to them achieving the English and / or maths requirements as described in paragraphs 53 to 55, providers should consider whether they should be offered the flexibility to achieve Entry Level 3 functional skills in the adjusted subject(s).

59. All individuals must be considered on a case-by-case basis and must satisfy all of the following conditions:

59.1. The apprentice has either an existing or previously issued education, health and care (EHC) plan (or one of the legacy equivalents: a statement of special educational need (SEN) or a learning difficulty assessment (LDA)), or the provider ensures that a thorough and evidence-based assessment (which uses a combination of robust methods) of the individual apprentices' learning difficulty or disability has been completed in a formal and structured manner by an appropriate professional (for example, the head of special education needs (SEN), or an equivalent individual with suitable knowledge and expertise) and a barrier has been identified. Self-declaration of a learning difficulty or a disability is insufficient.

59.2. The provider and the employer expect the apprentice to achieve all other aspects of the apprenticeship requirements, become occupationally competent and achieve entry level 3 functional skills in the adjusted subject(s) before the end of their apprenticeship.

59.3. The provider is able to demonstrate that even with support, reasonable adjustments and stepping stone qualifications, the apprentice will not be able to achieve English and / or maths to the level as described in paragraphs 53 to 55 within the timeframe projected for them to complete all the occupational elements.

59.4. Depending on the apprentice's individual circumstances and outcome of the provider's judgement, the exception outlined above may apply to either English and / or maths. If the exception applies to only one subject, the regular requirements for the non-adjusted subject will apply.

59.5. The provider must retain all elements of the judgement in the evidence pack.

60. Although the apprentice will be exempt from the regular English and / or maths minimum requirements, providers must plan and evidence how the apprentice will be supported to access further literacy and numeracy development, which could include level 1 and level 2 courses, if appropriate. This rule only applies if the apprentice meets all of the criteria set out in paragraph 59. The judgement must be formal and structured and conducted by an appropriate professional associated with the provider (or subcontractor), such as the head of special educational needs (SEN) or student support, or an equivalent individual with suitable knowledge and expertise. It must include:

60.1. A judgement of the apprentice's current English and maths ability;

60.2. Information on how the learning difficulty or disability affects the apprentice's English and maths abilities and a clear indication of whether English and / or maths are affected;

60.3. A judgement of the apprentice's ability to meet the regular English and maths requirements even with appropriate support in place;

60.4. The creation of a recommended learning plan to enable the apprentice to achieve entry-level 3 functional skills in the adjusted subject(s) and, where appropriate, to continue to build on their literacy and numeracy skills by accessing further courses; and

60.5. A copy of an education, health and care (EHC) plan (or one of the legacy equivalents: a statement of special educational need (SEN) or a learning difficulty assessment (LDA)) or the evidence of the assessment as outlined in 59.1.

61. These flexibilities apply to new starts and to all apprentices currently on-programme where the learning difficulty or disability has been identified and evidenced as a barrier to them achieving the requirements stated in paragraphs 53 to 55.

62. If the apprentice disagrees with the judgement outcome, the provider must provide a facility for the apprentice to request a second opinion and must ensure that a second SEN professional independently reviews the outcome. The provider may determine the format of the review process.

Evidence requirements

For all learners the provider has:

- For apprentices aged 19+, agreed with the employer, whether the apprentice will study towards a standalone English and / or maths qualification as part of their apprenticeship and has documented this decision in the training plan.

Where a standalone English and / or maths qualification has been included in the programme (for 16–18-year-old apprentices who do not hold the required level of English and / or maths for the standard, and for 19+ apprentices who have been opted in by their employer), the provider has:

Evidence requirements (continued)

- Detailed how English and / or maths will be delivered in the training plan and has evidence of delivery taking place against that plan, in line with the active learning requirement.

- Written evidence of the apprentice undertaking the assessment(s) and, for 16-18-year-old learners, achieving the relevant qualifications.

- Where applicable, provided a justification (not retrospective) about how they have arrived at the judgement as to whether the apprentice has enough time to make meaningful progress towards level 2 English and / or maths. This must be judged at an individual level.

- Provided additional information where the apprentice is assessed as exempt from the normal English and maths requirements. In these circumstances the provider must also include:

    - Details which show a thorough and evidence-based individualised assessment (which uses a combination of robust methods) of the apprentices' learning difficulty or disability has been conducted and a copy of the authorisation by an appropriate professional, for example the head of special education needs (SEN) or student support;

    - Evidence of how the apprentice's learning difficulty or disability affects their English and / or maths abilities;

- Evidence that support, reasonable adjustments, and access arrangements have been considered and the apprentice will not be able to achieve English and / or maths to the minimum level.

- The apprentice's recommended learning plan to achieve entry level 3 in English and / or maths (as appropriate); and

- Where applicable, the apprentice's education, health and care (EHC) plan (or one of the legacy equivalents: a statement of special educational need (SEN) or learning difficulty assessment (LDA)).

The outcome of the initial assessment

New for 1 August 2026 - Version 1

65.4 **Clarification:** The link between the job role and the apprenticeship must be clear and substantial, with the apprenticeship leading to full occupational competence for that role.

63. After completing the initial assessment, the provider must be able to evidence that the individual requires significant new knowledge, skills and behaviours in order to be occupationally competent in their job role, and that the training required meets the funding rules. They must discuss or share the outcome of the initial assessment with the individual and their employer, so that all parties understand how this information will inform a tailored training plan.

    63.1. This outcome can be discussed face to face, virtually, agreed via email or summarised as part of the signed training plan. There must be evidence that the employer agrees with the information provided.

    63.2. The discussion / documented outcome must include the activities covered by the initial assessment (i.e. learner eligibility, recognition of prior learning, learning support (where the apprentice has given their consent for this to be shared with their employer) and support for English and maths)). The provider must also include the points listed in paragraphs 64 to 66 below.

64. The provider must give the learner the opportunity to declare their eligibility for the care leavers' bursary, if the apprentice is aged 24 or younger (see paragraph 127).

65. The provider must agree with the employer:

    65.1. That an apprenticeship is the most appropriate training programme for the individual;

    65.2. That the training plan aligns with an approved apprenticeship standard, at the most appropriate level;

    65.3. That all relevant prior learning and experience has been identified and properly accounted for in the design of the training plan;

    65.4. That the individual's job role has a productive purpose and there is a clear and substantial link between the selected apprenticeship standard and the individual's primary day-to-day occupational duties and purpose, such that the apprenticeship will lead to full occupational competence relevant to that role;

65.5. How all parties will work together to achieve the apprenticeship (i.e. roles and responsibilities of the provider, employer, and apprentice); and.

65.6. The price of the apprenticeship (see paragraph 207). It must be clear to the employer from the outset how much they will need to contribute (if applicable).

66. The employer must agree with the provider to:

66.1. Provide the individual with the appropriate support and supervision to carry out both their job role and their apprenticeship (including the end-point assessment);

66.2. Release the apprentice for off-the-job training (and English and / or maths standalone qualifications if required), as documented in the training plan;

66.3. Provide the apprentice with the opportunity and support to embed and consolidate the knowledge, skills and behaviours, gained through off-the-job training, into the workplace; and

66.4. Take part or provide input into progress reviews.

Evidence requirements

The provider has:

- Confirmed, after completing the 4 key areas of initial assessment as outlined in paragraph 27 that the individual requires significant new knowledge, skills and behaviours in order to be occupationally competent in their job role, and that both the individual and the programme are eligible for funding.
- Agreed the initial assessment outcome with the employer and the apprentice and used this information to inform a tailored training plan.
- Evidenced that the employer agrees with the initial assessment outcome and that this information has been used to inform a tailored training plan.
- Evidenced that the employer agrees with the information provided (this could be in the form of an email or a signed training plan which has incorporated the initial assessment information).
- Evidenced that they have informed the apprentice about the care leavers' bursary, if the apprentice is aged 24 or younger.
- Agreed with the employer the conditions listed in paragraph 65*.

The employer has:

- Agreed to the conditions listed in paragraph 66*.

*Agreement to these conditions can be embedded in the signed training plan or the contract for services.

Programme eligibility

Overview

New for 1 August 2026

67 **Clarification:** Wording now aligns with KSB language in standards.

68 **Policy update:** Wording changed to reflect that all new apprentices must start on an approved apprenticeship standard that is eligible for funding. Providers must ensure that they comply with any restrictions / limits on the delivery of specific standards as detailed in the terms and conditions of their individual funding agreements.

New for 1 August 2026 - Version 1

68.3 **Clarification:** A level 7 non-mandatory qualification must not be used to deliver the content of a Level 6 standard.

New for 1 August 2026 - Version 2

68.3 **Clarification:** A level 7 non-mandatory unit or qualification must not be used to deliver the content of a Level 6 standard. We are working with Skills England to ensure that the content of each standard is clear with regards to mandatory / non mandatory qualifications.

67. An apprenticeship is a job with training. Through an apprenticeship, an apprentice will gain the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to be competent in their immediate job and future career. The apprentice will gain this through:

    67.1. Formal off-the-job training (which is the responsibility of the provider); and

    67.2. The opportunity to apply these new skills in a real work environment, in a productive job role (which is the responsibility of the apprentice's employer).

68. All new apprentices must start on an approved apprenticeship standard that is eligible for funding. Providers must comply with any restrictions and limits on the delivery of specific standards as set out in the terms and conditions of their individual funding agreements.

    68.1. We will fund an apprentice to undertake an apprenticeship at a higher level than a qualification they already hold, including a previous apprenticeship.

68.2. We will fund an apprentice to undertake an apprenticeship at the same or lower level than a qualification they already hold, if the apprenticeship will allow the individual to acquire significant new skills and the provider can show that the content of the training is materially different from any prior qualification or a previous apprenticeship.

68.3. A level 7 non-mandatory unit or qualification must not be used to deliver the content of a Level 6 standard. We are working with Skills England to ensure that the content of each standard is clear with regards to mandatory / non mandatory qualifications.

Evidence requirements

The provider:

- Where relevant, has used the information gained from the initial assessment to justify an apprenticeship at the same or lower level than a qualification the apprentice already holds.
- Is not using a level 7 non-mandatory unit or qualification to deliver against a Level 6 standard.

Employment arrangements (between the employer and the apprentice)

New for 1 August 2026

69.2 Clarification: The employer must keep their PAYE information in their apprenticeship service account up to date.

69. Unless the apprentice is on an alternative English apprenticeship, the provider must verify that the individual is employed and is working under a contract of employment that is long enough for the apprentice to complete the apprenticeship, including the end-point assessment.

69.1. If the apprentice has more than one employer (e.g. two part-time job roles), only one of these employers can be used for the purposes of the apprenticeship, so that it is clear who is undertaking the role of 'employer' as defined by these funding rules.

69.2. The apprentice must be included in the PAYE scheme declared in the apprenticeship service account. The employer must keep their PAYE information up to date.

69.3. The employer may agree with another organisation (e.g. in their supply chain) to second the apprentice for part of the apprenticeship, subject to all parties agreeing. The apprentice must spend at least 50% of their apprenticeship duration with the employer whose PAYE scheme they are on, unless they are:

69.3.1 Employed by a registered Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agency (see paragraphs 291 to 295);

69.3.2 Part of the NHS Workforce Sharing Agreement;

69.3.3 Members of the British Armed Forces on secondment / placement to the NHS; or

69.3.4 Seconded to an organisation who is part of a pooled PAYE scheme and therefore unable to access apprenticeship funding in their own right.

Evidence requirements

The provider has:

- Evidenced that the apprentice is employed, and that this contract is for a period of time which is long enough for the apprentice to complete the apprenticeship, including the end-point assessment. This can be a relevant extract from a contract of employment or a signed declaration by the employer on the training plan.

- Confirmed with the employer that the apprentice is included in the PAYE scheme declared in the apprenticeship service account and they (the employer) will keep the PAYE information in their account up to date.

- Confirmed with the employer that any secondment meets the rule / exceptions set out in paragraph 69.3.

Apprenticeship agreement (between the employer and the apprentice)

New for 1 August 2026 - Version 1

70.4 **Clarification:** A reminder that the original ILR planned end date must not change once submitted, even if the apprenticeship agreement is extended (unless there has been a break in learning and subsequent restart).

70. Unless the apprentice is on an alternative English apprenticeship, the provider must have evidence that the apprentice has an apprenticeship agreement with their employer, from the start of and for the actual duration of their apprenticeship.

70.1. This requirement is defined in section A1(3) of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (as amended by the Enterprise Act 2016) and the Apprenticeships (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2017.

70.2. A template apprenticeship agreement is available on GOV.UK. Where an alternative is used, the requirements of the legislation as described below (see paragraph 72) must be met when forming an apprenticeship agreement.

70.3. The employer must give a copy of the completed apprenticeship agreement to the provider.

70.4. The agreement must be extended if the programme is extended. (Note that the original planned learning end date in the ILR must remain unchanged (unless there has been a break in learning and subsequent restart)).

71. The provider must check that the apprenticeship agreement between the employer and the apprentice is complete, that the information is correct and that the agreement has been signed by both parties (the employer and the apprentice).

71.1. It is prohibited for someone to sign a contract, including an apprenticeship agreement, as both the apprentice and as the employer (even where a limited company, public services company, a partnership, or limited liability partnership has been created to act as a separate corporate entity).

71.2. The provider must check that there is a separate, identifiable line manager who is undertaking the role of the ‘employer’.

72. If the apprenticeship agreement is incomplete, or not signed, the individual will not have a valid agreement and the provider will therefore not be eligible to receive funding for them. The apprenticeship agreement must include:

72.1. The apprentice's details (name, place of work);

72.2. The apprenticeship standard and level;

72.3. The start and end date of the apprenticeship (these dates include the end-point assessment);

72.4. The start and end date of the practical period (this is the part of the apprenticeship where evidenced learning is delivered; this does not include the end-point assessment);

72.4.1 The practical period start date may be the same date as the apprenticeship start date. This is common for existing members of staff already employed in their job role when they become an apprentice and begin their training.

72.4.2 If an individual has been recruited into a business as an apprentice, the practical period start date may be later than the apprenticeship start date. This is so the individual can begin their job role first (the apprenticeship start date) and then begin their training (the practical period start date). These dates would usually be no more than 2-3 weeks apart.

72.4.3 The practical period start date aligns with the learning start date in the ILR and the practical period end date aligns with the planned learning end date in the ILR.

72.5. The duration of the practical period (see paragraphs 77 to 81 regarding minimum duration); and

72.6. The amount of time the apprentice will spend in off-the-job training (see paragraph 85).

Evidence requirements

- The provider has a signed copy of a complete (and therefore valid) apprenticeship agreement (along with any revisions) and that this agreement meets the criteria set out in paragraphs 71 to 72. The agreement has not been signed by the same person, acting as both the apprentice and the employer.

Alternative English apprenticeship

73. If an apprentice is not directly employed by an employer, the provider must verify that the individual can be funded through an alternative English apprenticeship. These alternative arrangements include:

    73.1. Apprentices who have been made redundant and are eligible to continue their apprenticeship (see paragraphs 312 to 316);

    73.2. Particular office holders, namely constables of English police forces and ministers or trainee ministers of a religious denomination;

    73.3. Apprentices taking part in the portable flexi-job apprenticeship pilot (see paragraph 12); and

    73.4. Apprentices who are prisoners (see paragraphs 296 to 297).

74. In relation to these alternative English apprentices, except for the requirement to have evidence of employment and an apprenticeship agreement, the provider and the employer must comply with all of the other rules as set out in this document.

Evidence requirements

- The provider has confirmed that the apprentice meets one of the conditions of an alternative English apprenticeship. In the case of redundancy, the evidence requirements are listed in the redundancy section (paragraphs 312 to 316).

Apprentice wages

New for 1 August 2026 - Version 1

76.1 **Update:** If a provider is made aware that a learner is not being paid in line with the National Minimum Wage Regulations, the learner must be withdrawn from the programme.

75. Every apprentice must be paid a lawful wage for the time they are in work and in training (active learning). The employer is responsible for paying the apprentice’s wages and complying with the national minimum wage regulations.

    75.1. The employer must only use the apprentice rate of the national minimum wage from the apprenticeship start date (see paragraph 72.4.2) and not before.

75.2. Where an individual permanently withdraws from the apprenticeship and is no longer an apprentice, the employer must not continue to use the apprentice rate of the national minimum wage. This does not apply to those on a break in learning.

75.3. For prisoner apprenticeships in the closed estate, the wage must be compliant with the HMPPS policy (see paragraph 297).

76. The provider must confirm with the employer that the apprentice will be paid a lawful wage whilst they are on the apprenticeship.

76.1. If the provider is subsequently made aware (e.g. by the learner or by DfE/DWP), that this is not happening, they must withdraw the learner from the programme.

76.2. Further information on the national minimum wage, the apprenticeship rate and the definition of an employee can be found on GOV.UK. or via the ACAS helpline.

Evidence requirements

The provider

- has confirmed with the employer that the apprentice will receive a lawful wage whilst they are on the apprenticeship. This evidence can be a copy of the employment terms and conditions or a written statement regarding wages on the training plan (which is subsequently signed by the employer);
- has withdrawn the learner where they have been made aware of a failure to comply with the National Minimum Wage Regulations.

The employer has not used the apprentice rate prior to the apprenticeship start date (the date shown on the apprenticeship agreement).

Minimum duration and employment hours

Minimum duration of practical period

77. The provider must confirm that, after all relevant prior learning and experience has been taken into account, the apprenticeship practical period lasts for a minimum duration of 8 months. For example, to satisfy this requirement, an apprentice who starts their training on 1 August 2026 must still be receiving training on 31 March 2027.

77.1. The apprenticeship standard specification or assessment plan may require this practical period of training to be longer, to support the delivery of the full apprenticeship content.

77.2. The end-point assessment can only be taken after the minimum duration has been met.

77.3. The minimum duration of each apprenticeship is based on the apprentice working at least 30 hours per week, including any off-the-job training they undertake. Working fewer than 30 hours per week or having a zero-hours contract must not be a barrier to successfully completing an apprenticeship.

Episodes of learning below the minimum duration requirement

78. If an apprentice starts a new apprenticeship, time on any previous apprenticeship does not apply in meeting the minimum duration requirements. The only exceptions to this are where an apprentice:

78.1. Is made redundant with more than six, but less than eight months remaining before their final day;

78.2. Transfers onto a newer version of the same apprenticeship standard (where the ST standard code remains the same);

78.3. Transfers between providers but remains on the same apprenticeship standard; or

78.4. Returns to the same apprenticeship after a break in learning or withdrawal.

79. For the exceptions above, the provider must have evidence that the total amount of time spent on the apprenticeship, which may include more than one episode of learning, meets the minimum duration requirement.

Part-time employment hours (<30 hours per week) and zero-hours employment contracts

80. If, at the beginning of the apprenticeship, the apprentice works fewer than 30 hours a week, or has a zero-hours contract, the provider must consider the apprentice’s working hours when setting a duration, so that training expectations are realistic.

80.1. The provider must agree, with the employer, that the expected duration of the apprenticeship for a part-time apprentice is realistic.

80.2. Zero-hours contracts are only acceptable where all of the other funding rules can be met.

81. Any apprentice, including those who are part-time or on a zero-hours contract, can complete the requirements of the apprenticeship standard earlier than their learning planned end date, where it is practical and possible to do so, provided the minimum duration (8 months) and the minimum off-the-job hours have both been met.

Evidence requirements

The provider has:

- Confirmed, following an initial assessment, that the individual requires an apprenticeship practical period that meets the minimum duration of 8 months, after any relevant prior learning has been recognised. This can be evidenced via the dates on the ILR and associated paperwork.
- Evidenced, for the circumstances described in paragraph 78, that the total amount of time spent on the apprenticeship, which may include more than one episode of learning, meets the minimum duration requirement.
- Evidenced, where the apprentice works part-time (fewer than 30 hours per week) or is on a zero-hours contract, that they have considered the working hours and have set a realistic duration.

Off-the-job training

New for 1 August 2026

85 **Update:** The reference to Annex C has been removed. The minimum volume of off-the-job training for each standard can now be found on each standard (on the Skills England website).

90 **Clarification:** A reminder that only eligible off-the-job training can be included in the actual hours field on the ILR

91 **Clarification:** A reminder that the provider is responsible for the evidencing of all required off-the-job training, even if another party (e.g. subcontractor, employer) delivers this training.

95.1 **Clarification:** A reminder that OTJT active learning does not include English and maths standalone qualifications.

- **Update:** The evidencing off-the-job training section has now been included in the evidence box text.

Overview

82. Off-the-job training is a statutory requirement for an English apprenticeship. The provider must verify that the off-the-job training delivered to the apprentice meets the following definition:

    82.1. It is training which is received by the apprentice within their practical period, during the apprentice's normal working hours, for the purpose of achieving the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) of the apprenticeship they are undertaking. By normal working hours we mean the hours for which the apprentice would normally be paid, excluding overtime.

    82.2. It is not on-the-job training, which is training received by the apprentice for the sole purpose of enabling the apprentice to perform the work for which they have been employed. By this we mean training that does not specifically link to the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the apprenticeship.

    82.3. Further information about off-the-job training can be found on GOV.UK.

    82.4. Funds are at risk of recovery if the off-the-job training policy is not met.

What can be included

83. The provider must ensure that off-the-job training delivers new skills that are directly relevant to the apprenticeship standard. This can include:

    83.1. The teaching of theory (e.g. lectures, role playing, simulation exercises, online learning and manufacturer training);

    83.2. Practical training (e.g. shadowing, mentoring, industry visits and participation in competitions);

    83.3. Learning support;

    83.4. Time spent writing assignments; and

    83.5. Revision.

What must not be included

84. The provider must ensure that the following activities are not included as off-the-job training:

    84.1. Initial assessment and onboarding activities;

    84.2. English and maths standalone qualifications (if required, these must be delivered in addition to the minimum off-the-job training requirement);

    84.3. Training to acquire knowledge, skills and behaviours that are not required by the apprenticeship standard;

    84.4. Progress reviews;

    84.5. Examinations and other on-programme testing (e.g. linked to a qualification or the EPA); and

    84.6. Training which takes place outside the apprentice’s normal working hours;

        84.6.1 If off-the-job training must, by exception, take place outside these hours, the apprentice must agree and be compensated (e.g. time off in lieu or an additional payment). The majority of the training must not be delivered in this way.

Calculating off-the-job training

85. The minimum volume of off-the-job training for all apprentices (full-time, part-time, term-time), will be published on the front of each apprenticeship standard. This published figure:

85.1. Represents the full occupational content of the standard (all KSBs) and the minimum delivery requirement for an apprentice with no relevant prior learning.

86. To be eligible for government funding the provider must ensure that an apprentice with no relevant prior learning receives at least the published volume of off-the-job training hours for the standard.

86.1. A provider can plan to deliver more than the published minimum requirement but can only deliver less if there is evidence of relevant prior learning from the apprentice's initial assessment (see paragraph 39).

For example: A learner has no prior learning, and the standard requires a minimum of 466 off-the-job training hours. The provider plans to deliver more than the minimum requirement (550 hours) and the learner completes with 500 hours of evidenced delivery. This is a compliant programme (although an employer statement would be needed to explain the difference between planned and actual hours (see paragraph 96)).

If the above learner has 50 hours of prior learning the provider would follow the RPL policy (see paragraph 39.3) and reduce their typical planned hours from 550 hours to 500 hours. For compliance purposes the minimum requirement for the standard would also reduce, by the same amount (from 466 hours to 416 hours), to account for the prior learning. Provided the learner received more than 416 hours of training this would be a compliant programme, provided the employer statement (if necessary) had been obtained.

86.2. No programme must fall below 187 hours of evidenced delivery.

86.3. Some apprentices and standards will need more than the published minimum requirement. Apprentices must receive the volume of high-quality apprenticeship training that they need to develop full occupational competence.

87. The provider must agree with the employer the volume of off-the-job training hours and the most appropriate timeframe and delivery model in which to deliver the training.

87.1. There is no direct delivery link between the required hours and the apprentice's planned (or actual) duration. The planned hours, reduced if necessary to account for relevant and evidenced prior learning, can be delivered over any timeframe, provided the statutory minimum duration (of 8 months) is met. For example, if the standard required 278 hours this training could be delivered over 8 months, 12 months or 15 months.

87.2. The provider must still adhere to the active learning requirements (see paragraphs 92 to 95).

87.3. The programme does not need to be automatically extended to account for a part-time apprentice. However, when setting the duration for a part-time apprentice the provider must consider their working hours, so that training expectations are realistic.

Documenting off-the-job training

88. All required and eligible off-the-job training activity (see paragraph 83) must be agreed in advance of delivery and the provider must document the activity as part of the agreed training plan (for longer programmes see paragraph 99.1.2).

89. The provider must document the number of planned off-the-job training hours, for the full apprenticeship, on the apprenticeship agreement, the training plan and the individualised learner record (ILR).

89.1. Providers must use their own typical planned hours for the standard which must be at least equal to, but can be more than, the off-the-job training minimum requirement published on the standard. The figure can be reduced only where there is evidence of relevant prior learning.

89.2. The planned off-the-job training hours figure on the ILR must not be changed once it has been submitted, except for a data input error at the beginning of the programme.

90. The provider must also document, on the ILR, the eligible off-the-job training hours actually delivered, at the end of the practical period or where the apprentice leaves the apprenticeship early as a non-completer. Actual delivery information may inform future iterations of each standard’s minimum requirement.

Delivering off-the-job training

91. The provider is responsible for the delivery and evidencing of all required off-the-job training, to enable the apprentice to reach full occupational competence against the standard, even if another party (e.g. subcontractor, employer) delivers this training. They must agree with the employer when, where and how the training will be delivered.

91.1. The entire apprenticeship must not be fully delivered by self-directed distance learning.

91.2. All training must take place during the practical period, between the learning start date and the learning end date reported in the ILR.

91.3. The actual learning end date must only be recorded when the last piece of training relevant to the standard has been delivered.

91.4. A template evidence form is available on GOV.UK. It is not mandatory to use this template.

Front-loaded and block release delivery models

92. If delivery is via a front-loaded or a block release model (see glossary definitions), the provider must agree this delivery model with the employer, and this must be documented in the signed training plan.

93. The provider is responsible for ensuring that there is a plan for off-the-job training active learning (OTJT active learning) to take place at least every 3 calendar months of the practical period (from the learning start date to the learning actual end date). For example, if delivery takes place on 1 August 2026, OTJT active learning must next take place on or before 30 November 2026.

93.1. A break in learning must be used where there is no plan for OTJT active learning to take place within a 3-calendar month period.

93.2. If planned off-the-job training is unable to take place as scheduled in any 3-calendar month period, a retrospective break in learning must be used.

All other delivery models

94. If the training plan does not clearly show an agreed front-loaded or block release delivery model (see glossary definitions), the provider is responsible for ensuring that there is a plan for OTJT active learning to take place at least in every calendar month of the practical period (from the learning start date to the learning actual end date). For example, if delivery takes place on 1 August 2026, delivery must next take place on or before 30 September 2026.

94.1. A break in learning must be used where there is no plan for OTJT active learning to take place within a calendar month. The only exception to this is for those apprentices with a term-time only contract, where we do not require a break in learning for the month of August (i.e. the summer holiday period).

94.2. If off-the-job training is planned but unable to take place as scheduled in any one calendar month, a retrospective break in learning is not required as long as there is OTJT active learning in the following calendar month. Where there is no OTJT active learning for 2 consecutive calendar months, a retrospective break in learning must be used. The provider must ensure that all missed activity is re-planned, so that the full content of the training plan can still be delivered.

Principles

95. OTJT active learning does not need to be delivered by the provider; it can include any activity that has been agreed and documented as part of the agreed training plan. When the training documented on the training plan is complete, the practical period is complete.

95.1. OTJT active learning does not include study towards English and maths standalone qualifications.

95.2. Some occupations require the provider to be approved by a regulatory body before being able to deliver training for the apprenticeship. We may take action to recover apprenticeship funding where providers have delivered training but do not have the necessary approval.

95.3. Apprentices on maternity, adoption or shared parental leave may use their statutory keep in touch (KIT / SPLIT) days to continue with apprenticeship training, assessment or end-point assessment during their period of leave (please refer to paragraphs 317 to 326).

Planned hours agreed at the beginning of the apprenticeship versus actual hours delivered

96. At the end of the practical period, once all training has been delivered, if the actual volume of off-the-job training delivered is less than the original volume planned and agreed with the employer, the provider must produce a statement to summarise the following information:

96.1. The original volume of planned hours agreed with the employer.

96.2. The volume of hours actually delivered (supported by proof of delivery).

96.3. The reason for delivering less.

96.4. Confirmation that the volume of hours delivered met the off-the-job training minimum requirement for the apprenticeship standard.

96.4.1 If RPL applies, this can be factored into the above statement (see example in paragraph 86.1).

97. The provider must arrange for the employer and apprentice to sign this statement, to confirm they are satisfied by the training delivered, even though this was less than the volume of training originally agreed.

97.1. This statement compares the original intent with what was delivered; it is not a substitute for the training plan being updated, where necessary, on an ongoing basis (e.g. as a result of progress reviews) (see paragraph 103.4).

98. Where a signed statement is required, this must be completed, signed and made available as part of the evidence pack within 12 weeks of the apprentice completing their apprenticeship. Where this is not available, funds may be at risk of recovery.

Evidence requirements

The provider has:

- Set a planned OTJT hours value which is at least equal to, but can be more than, the OTJT requirement on the standard for a learner with no prior learning. They have adjusted this figure, if necessary, to account for relevant and evidenced prior learning.

- Agreed, with the employer, an appropriate timeframe in which to deliver the required hours.

- Documented the planned volume of off-the-job training hours on the training plan and the ILR and has confirmed that this has also been documented on the employer's apprenticeship agreement. All volumes and dates align.

- Delivered or arranged for the delivery of off-the-job training. If the delivery model is a front-loaded or a block release model, this has been agreed with the employer and documented in the training plan.

- Planned for OTJT active learning to take place every calendar month (every 3 calendar months for front-loaded and block release models) and a break in learning has been used where there was no plan (see paragraphs 93.1 to 93.2 and 94.1 to 94.2).

- Where relevant, been approved by the relevant regulatory body before delivering apprenticeship training and there is evidence of this approval.

- Documented the actual volume of off-the-job training hours on the ILR when the learner exits the apprenticeship (completers and early leavers) and ensured that this value is supported by proof of delivery. The actual hours can be higher than the planned hours (to account for individual provider delivery models).

- Evidenced all OTJT delivery (their own and that of others (e.g. subcontractors, employers, learners)). All delivery evidence must be quantifiable and must meet the definition given in paragraphs 82 and 83. No ineligible activities (see paragraph 84) have been included. The evidence should include a broad description of the activity or the session it relates to (e.g. subject title or module / lesson number) to enable a cross-check against the training plan.

- Where the actual hours are less than the planned hours, produced a statement to explain the difference and this has been signed by all parties.

The training plan

New for 1 August 2026

100.3 Clarification: Providers are already able to include a summary of the initial assessment on the training plan.

New for 1 August 2026 – Version 1

101 **Policy update**: At the end of the programme, the employer, provider and learner must agree that the content of the training plan has been delivered. This can either be recorded in the training plan or in the provider's gateway review process.

99. The provider is responsible for developing and agreeing a training plan with the apprentice and the employer. The apprentice and employer must be given the opportunity to contribute to this plan.

99.1. The broad content of the training plan must be agreed before any training is delivered. If the provider is able to get a signed training plan in place prior to any delivery, they should do so.

99.1.1 Where the initial agreement (of the broad content) is virtual or via email, and the provider is unable to get a signed version of the training plan in place before any training is delivered, the provider must be able to evidence this broad agreement (e.g. an email from the employer) and have a fully signed version of the plan in place by the end of the 42 day 'qualifying day' period.

99.1.2 We accept that for longer apprenticeships full content details may not be known at the start. Where this is the case, the signed plan must list the total volume of planned hours (for the entire apprenticeship) with additional content information being added as this becomes available.

99.2. The training plan must not include any content that has been identified and agreed with the employer, as relevant prior learning (see paragraphs 35 to 39).

99.3. Funding can only be claimed from the date on which learning activity that is related to the apprenticeship and documented in the training plan begins and can be evidenced.

99.4. The training plan and apprenticeship agreement must be separate documents (each document has a different purpose and different signature requirements (i.e. the provider is not a signatory to the apprenticeship agreement but they are a signatory to the training plan)).

99.5. A template training plan is available on GOV.UK. It is not mandatory to use this template. Where an alternative is used, it must comply with paragraph 100 below.

100. The provider must make sure the training plan includes:

100.1. The name of the apprentice, their job role and normal working hours. By normal working hours we mean the number of paid hours they work each week excluding overtime.

100.2. Details of all relevant parties (the provider, employer, any subcontractors and the end-point assessment organisation).

100.2.1 If the end-point assessment organisation is not known at the start of the apprenticeship, the training plan must be updated as soon as this information becomes available. This must be no later than 6 months before the learning planned end date (see paragraph 143).

100.3. Summary of the initial assessment (if not recorded separately)

100.4. Details of the apprenticeship, including the name of the apprenticeship standard, the level, the start and end dates for both the apprenticeship and the practical period of training.

100.5. The total volume of planned off-the-job training hours (see paragraph 86).

100.6. A brief description of the delivery model (e.g. day release, block release, front-loaded – see glossary).

100.7. Details of the occupational training to be delivered. This can be a description of the activities, the knowledge, skills and behaviours or, in the case of a standard with a mandatory qualification, a list of the units.

100.7.1 It must be clear if the occupational training has been included in the planned off-the-job training hours.

100.8. Details of any English and / or maths standalone qualifications to be delivered (see paragraphs 47 to 62)

100.8.1 It must be clear that English and / or maths standalone qualifications have not been included in the planned off-the-job training hours.

100.9. The training plan must not include any content that has been identified and agreed with the employer, as relevant prior learning (see paragraphs 35 to 39).

100.10. Details of when content will be delivered.

100.11. Details of who is responsible for each component of delivery.

100.11.1 This may include the provider, a subcontractor or the employer. Where this party is accessing apprenticeship funding for the delivery, they must be on the Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR) (unless the exemption at paragraph 262.4 applies).

100.12. Written confirmation from the employer that the apprentice will be allowed to undertake off-the-job training within their normal working hours, in addition to English and maths standalone qualifications if required.

100.13. Summary details of progress reviews, including the frequency and format (see paragraphs 102 to 103).

100.14. The process for resolving any queries or complaints regarding the apprenticeship. This must include details of the escalation route within the main provider’s own organisation and the escalation process to Apprenticeship Service Support on 08000 150 600 or mailto:helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk

101. At the end of the programme, the employer, provider and learner must agree that the content of the training plan has been delivered. This can either be recorded in the training plan or in the gateway review process.

Evidence requirements

The provider has:

- A copy of the current training plan, signed and dated by all parties (along with any previous versions) and this meets the criteria set out in paragraph 100. It has been kept up to date with any material changes (e.g. as a result of a change of circumstance or a progress review).

- Evidence that the plan was agreed by all parties prior to training being delivered (where this was agreed virtually / by correspondence, a signed plan was in place by the end of the 42-day qualifying period). Additional content was added to the plan as it became available (e.g. for longer apprenticeships and where options were decided after the programme began).

The employer has:

- Confirmed, as part of the signed plan, that they will allow the apprentice to complete the apprenticeship within their normal working hours, including any standalone English and maths qualifications required.

All parties have agreed that the training plan has been delivered.

Progress reviews

New for 1 August 2026

102.1 Policy update: Where an alternative progress review timetable is agreed with the employer this should be in advance and reviews must be no more than 6 months apart.

102. During the practical period, the provider must undertake regular progress reviews, at least every 3 calendar months, to discuss the progress to date of the apprentice against their training plan. For example, if a progress review takes place on 1 August 2026, the next review must take place on or before 30 November 2026.

    102.1. If there is an evidenced delivery reason (e.g. module length), that means an alternative frequency (to every 3 months) is more appropriate the provider must be able to evidence that this has been agreed, with the employer, in advance of the programme starting. These reviews must be no more than 6 months apart. Learning support reviews (where applicable) must still take place at least every 3 calendar months.

102.2. The review must be a three-way discussion involving the provider, employer and the apprentice. Progress reviews can be face to face, virtual or can be via email.

102.2.1 If the employer is unable to attend, they must be given the opportunity to contribute. This must not become the default position; for each individual apprentice, the employer must attend, physically or virtually, in the majority of occurrences.

102.2.2 In all cases a summary of the discussion must be shared with all parties. This summary must be signed, as a minimum, by the provider and the apprentice.

102.3. The progress review has a different purpose to the required check every 3 calendar months associated with learning support funding (see paragraph 44.5). The two discussions can be combined (where appropriate) but where this happens, there must be evidence of both discussions.

103. The provider must ensure that the progress review:

103.1. Checks progress against any actions agreed at the previous review, including any training that has been delivered since the last review;

103.2. Allows for any evidence of training, particularly that which is outside of the provider's control, to be discussed, agreed, documented or collected;

103.3. Checks overall progress of the apprentice against their agreed training plan, and that any slippage against the volume of planned off-the-job training is documented;

103.4. Provides for an opportunity to update the training plan;

103.4.1 We only expect the training plan to be re-signed by the employer where a) new content is added or removed, b) the planned learning end date has changed; or c) any re-planned off-the-job training (that was missed or not delivered) has a key impact on the hours which employers need to release learners for in future.

103.4.2 Changes to the training plan that fall outside of the examples above do not need a new employer signature.

103.5. Allows for any concerns and / or new information (e.g. changes of circumstance) to be discussed. This could include any additional relevant prior learning, learning difficulties or disability concerns, or learning support needs, that have become known since the original initial assessment. Changes to the training plan may require the price to be renegotiated; and

103.6. Agrees and documents actions for the next review.

Evidence requirements

The provider has:

- Undertaken and documented progress reviews in accordance with paragraphs 102 to 103 and has shared the agreed outcome or actions with the employer and the apprentice. Where the employer is not able to attend, there is evidence that they were given the opportunity to contribute to the review.

- Evidence that progress is being made towards the agreed training plan (see off-the-job training section regarding the nature of this evidence).

What can be funded

New for 1 August 2026

- **Restructure:** The section has been restructured and superfluous text removed. Some costs have been combined. Some text has been moved to the 'price of an apprenticeship section' of the funding rules.

- **Update:** The term 'on-programme assessment' has been removed throughout the rules. Previously this was defined as any (formative) assessment activity required as a result of a mandatory qualification during the programme (e.g. an exam at the end of a module). Given the ongoing EPA reforms, we have reviewed this language and decided to remove it to avoid confusion.

107.5 **Policy change:** A level 7 non-mandatory qualification must not be used to deliver the content of a Level 6 standard.

New for 1 August 2026 – Version 2

107.5 **Clarification:** A level 7 non-mandatory unit or qualification must not be used to deliver the content of a Level 6 standard. We are working with Skills England to ensure that the content of each standard is clear with regards to mandatory / non mandatory qualifications.

110.4 **Update:** We have removed reference to the costs of reporting employer co-investment.

Overview

104. The provider must ensure that funds from an employer's apprenticeship service account or government-employer co-investment are only used for the eligible costs listed below (paragraphs 106 to 110). These costs relate to an individual apprenticeship, up to the funding band maximum.

105. The ineligible costs listed (see paragraphs 111 to 120) must not be included in the price that the provider agrees with the employer.

Eligible costs – training (TNP1)

106. Initial assessment:

    106.1. Initial assessment to confirm learner and programme eligibility and the administration related to the subsequent enrolment (onboarding) of the apprentice.

107. Off-the-job training (that meets the definition in paragraphs 82 to 83):

107.1. Relevant tutor costs (salary, on-costs, travel and subsistence claims). By on-costs we mean employer pension contributions and national insurance. Travel and subsistence costs must relate to apprenticeship delivery.

107.2. Necessary delivery location costs (room hire or a proportionate contribution to the necessary facilities and overheads (i.e. water, electricity, gas), that enable the delivery of the documented off-the-job training to take place).

107.3. Learning materials used in the delivery of the apprenticeship (e.g. printed, audio / visual and electronic / interactive materials), including any relevant software licences to access these materials where the licence cost is at apprentice level. Learning materials can be developed in-house or bought from a third party.

107.4. All training associated with a mandatory qualification.

107.5. Relevant training associated with a non-mandatory qualification. For these qualifications we will only fund relevant training, where there is a clear overlap between the qualification content and the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed for the apprenticeship. A level 7 non-mandatory unit or qualification must not be used to deliver the content of a Level 6 standard (see paragraph 68.3). We are working with Skills England to ensure that the content of each standard is clear with regards to mandatory / non mandatory qualifications.

107.6. Costs of an employer supporting or mentoring an apprentice, where this is required by the standard and part of the agreed training plan; by this we mean the delivery of knowledge, skills and behaviours linked to the apprenticeship. (Note: to receive apprenticeship funding, the employer must be on the Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (unless the exemptions at paragraphs 262.3 to 262.4 apply)).

107.7. Additional learning required to re-sit an exam linked to either a mandatory qualification or an end-point assessment.

107.8. Costs of an apprentice taking part in any skills competition, if the employer and provider have agreed that participation in the competition directly contributes to helping that individual achieve the apprenticeship.

108. Materials and consumables:

108.1. Necessary physical materials (non-capital items) used in the delivery of the apprenticeship. By this we mean the equipment or supplies necessary to enable a particular learning activity to happen (e.g. perishable ingredients for a catering apprenticeship). These items would not normally have a lifespan beyond the individual apprenticeship being funded. Personal protective equipment that is exclusively used in the off-the-job training environment can also be included.

109. Peripheral costs including assessment and re-sits:

109.1. Progress reviews involving the provider, employer and apprentice to collectively discuss progress to date of the apprentice against the training plan and the immediate next steps required.

109.2. Peripheral costs associated with a mandatory qualification (e.g. registration, formative assessment, examination and certification), plus the cost of one re-sit (per mandatory qualification) (only where needed).

110. Programme governance, management and administration (directly linked to the programme):

110.1. The costs relating to lesson planning, quality assurance and the management of subcontractors.

110.2. Proportionate salary and on-costs of staff who are directly involved in the programme governance, management and administration of the apprenticeship.

110.3. Administration costs of arranging the end-point assessment.

110.4. The costs of collecting employer co-investment.

110.5. The costs of using an apprenticeship software system to return management information (e.g. salary and on-costs of management information staff and the software licences to operate the MI system).

110.6. For the nursing associate apprenticeship only, the costs of hosting an external placement. Note that hosting fees are separate from the delivery costs of training during a placement (see paragraph 123).

Ineligible costs – training (TNP1)

111. Specific services / costs not related to the delivery and administration of the apprenticeship (typical ‘provider’ costs):

111.1. Lead generation and pre-screening activities (learner and employer recruitment). This includes marketing and promotion activities, the use of internal sales teams or external referral services, and the costs paid to employers (or their representatives), associated with procurement registers or other opportunities to secure business (e.g. memberships).

111.2. The recruitment (including DBS checks) and continuing professional development of provider staff.

111.3. Development of original teaching materials related to a new apprenticeship offer. By this we mean the first time a provider chooses to deliver a new apprenticeship standard.

111.4. Provider / subcontractor induction activities. This may include outlining behaviour expectations and issuing the apprentice with any workbooks, contact details, logins and passwords.

111.5. Student support services, graduation ceremonies and celebration events.

111.6. Wider business costs. This includes insurance, rent / rates, utilities (water, electricity, gas), building maintenance, phone systems, library service.

111.7. The cost of non-apprenticeship personnel (e.g. finance, HR, procurement), where these costs are not directly attributable to the apprenticeship.

112. Specific services / costs not related to the delivery and administration of the apprenticeship (typical 'employer' costs):

112.1. Apprentice wages (including the costs of backfill), benefits, travel and subsistence costs (including travel to off-the-job training).

112.2. All accommodation costs associated with off-the-job training, including outward-bound activities.

112.3. Personal protective clothing / uniforms and safety equipment required by the apprentice to carry out their day-to-day work.

112.4. The recruitment (including DBS checks) and continuing professional development of employer staff involved in apprenticeships.

112.5. Employer induction activities for the apprentice.

112.6. Flexi-job apprenticeship agency fees.

112.7. Student membership fees that are required by professional bodies, even when linked to a mandatory qualification.

112.8. For non-mandatory qualifications: any training this is not relevant to the KSBs of the apprenticeship standard, any peripheral costs (e.g.

registration, examination, certification and re-sits) and additional learning to re-sit an exam.

112.9. Re-sit costs for a mandatory qualification, beyond the first re-sit (which is eligible).

112.10. Any training in excess of that required to pass the end-point assessment and achieve the apprenticeship.

112.11. Time spent by employees / managers supporting or mentoring apprentices, where this is not delivering training required as part of the apprenticeship (i.e. generic line management responsibilities) or the creation of line manager resources.

113. Cost of assessing overseas qualifications (e.g. UK ENIC).

114. English and maths standalone qualifications up to level 2 (these are funded separately and must not be included in the TNP1 price).

115. Learning support: the costs associated with any further detailed assessment for learning support (see paragraphs 40 to 46) and learning support payments (these payments are funded separately and must not be included in the TNP1 price).

116. Repeating the same regulated qualification where the apprentice has previously achieved it (unless it is a requirement of the apprenticeship or for any GCSE where the apprentice has not achieved grade C, or 4, or higher).

117. Examinations and other testing (relating to the end-point assessment).

118. End-point assessment costs incurred by the provider, including invigilation. All costs related to the end-point assessment (except for the administration of arranging the assessment) must be included in the price negotiated between the provider (or employer) and the end-point assessment organisation (TNP2 field on ILR).

119. Capital purchases including lease agreements. Capital purchases are long-term assets that would have a lifespan beyond the apprenticeship being funded, such as land, buildings, machinery and ICT equipment (e.g. tablets and similar electronic devices and the purchase / set-up costs of an MI / e-portfolio system).

119.1. Maintenance of capital purchases and component parts (including machinery / vehicle parts and labour, insurance, servicing and MOT), depreciation costs.

120. Financial inducements: any other payment not authorised by us, must not be paid to an apprentice, employer, training provider or end-point assessment organisation in relation to any part of the apprenticeship (including bonus payments to

apprentices or employers for starting or completing an apprenticeship). Where an employer tenders for apprenticeship provision, training extras in excess of the apprenticeship requirements must not be included in the price.

120.1. Providers and subcontractors must not seek or accept financial inducements in relation to the apprenticeship.

Principles

121. The majority of main providers will operate on commercial terms and will expect to create a surplus (profit) from the delivery of eligible costs; a surplus ensures the financial viability of a business. The provider can use these funds in any way they choose (e.g. to improve facilities and services). A provider can also choose to use their profit to fund ineligible costs.

122. A surplus (profit) can be made on eligible costs, except for:

122.1. Items that are procured from external sources. For example, if £500 of materials are bought to be used in the delivery of training (e.g. perishable ingredients for catering apprenticeships), additional profit must not be charged on the £500 price of these materials to the employer.

122.2. Delivery that is procured from a subcontractor. Note that this only relates to the specific fees charged by that subcontractor; a provider can still cover the costs of managing the subcontractor under the eligible cost of 'Programme governance, management and administration'.

123. Any of the eligible costs outlined in paragraphs 106 to 110 can be bought in from a third party, including the apprentice's employer, and we will fund them.

123.1. Where the provider buys in the delivery of apprenticeship training from a third party (including the apprentice's employer) this is subcontracting and the provider must follow the subcontracting rules in paragraphs 253 to 290.

124. Providers and employers who are able to access apprenticeship funding, can only claim actual costs and must not make a profit from apprenticeship delivery to their own staff or those of a connected company or charity.

Evidence requirements

- The provider has agreed a price with the employer and has confirmed in the contract for services that only the direct eligible costs, as listed in the apprenticeship funding rules, have been included in the price.

Additional payments for employers, providers and care leaver apprentices

New for 1 August 2026

125 **Clarification:** To clarify that both the provider and the employer will receive the additional payment, where the apprentice meets the eligibility criteria.

127.1 **Clarification:** To confirm what information providers should be providing to their apprentices – this is to avoid the risk that providers do not share all the information that apprentices may need to declare their care leaver status.

132 **Clarification:** To confirm what the minimum expectations are on providers when contacting employers for their bank details.

Eligibility criteria

125. The provider and the employer will both receive an additional £1,000 towards the additional cost associated with training if, at the start of the apprenticeship training, the apprentice is:

  125.1. Aged between 16 and 18 years old (or 15 years of age if the apprentice's 16th birthday is between the last Friday of June and 31 August); or

  125.2. Aged between 19 and 24 years old and has either an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan provided by their local authority and / or has been, or are, in the care of their local authority as defined in paragraph 127.3.

126. Employer-providers can receive both employer and provider payments if the apprentice meets the eligibility criteria.

127. The provider must provide all 16–24-year-old apprentices (or 15 years of age if the apprentice's 16th birthday is between the last Friday of June and 31 August) the opportunity to declare their eligibility for the care leavers' bursary. This should be done before or when the apprenticeship starts so that the payments can support the apprentice as soon as possible.

  127.1. The care leaver bursary can be crucial in supporting apprenticeship completion. Providers should tell all apprentices, aged under 25, how much the bursary is and how it will be paid, that it is tax free and not treated as income in Universal Credit calculations. They should explain eligibility and inform the apprentice that they do not have to tell their employer they are care-experienced. If necessary, they should support the apprentice in obtaining evidence of care experience from the relevant local authority.

127.2. Apprentices are eligible to receive a £3,000 bursary if they are, or have been, in the care of a UK local authority as defined below (nb: if the apprentice has had the support of a Local Authority leaving care personal advisor, it is likely that they will meet this criteria).

127.3. A care leaver is defined as:

127.3.1 An eligible child – a young person who is 16 or 17 and who has been looked after by a UK local authority / health and social care trust for at least a period of 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who is still looked after;

127.3.2 A relevant child – a young person who is 16 or 17 who has left care within the UK after their 16th birthday and before leaving care was an eligible child; or

127.3.3 A former relevant child – a young person who is under the age of 25 who, before turning 18, was either an eligible or a relevant child.

127.4. Where the apprentice is aged between 19 and 24 years old, at the start of their apprenticeship training (see paragraph 125.2), providers must obtain consent from the apprentice to inform their employer that they have an EHC plan or that they have been, or are, in the care of their local authority.

127.4.1 Where an apprentice does not want to inform their employer that they have an EHC plan or that they have been, or are, in care this must be reported in the ILR. This will generate the funding for the provider but not the employer.

127.5. If eligibility for the bursary is not recorded in the ILR during the funding year that the 60 day payment would be due (see paragraph 129), and the apprentice is still on-programme, then please refer to the Apprenticeship Technical Funding Guide on how to claim this bursary.

Payment of claims

128. The provider and employer additional payments will be generated, (and paid via the provider) as follows:

128.1. 90 days after the apprentice’s learning start date, 50% will be paid if the apprentice is still undertaking their apprenticeship; and

128.2. 365 days after the apprentice’s learning start date, the remaining 50% will be paid if the apprentice is still undertaking their apprenticeship.

128.2.1 Where the apprentice is on a shorter apprenticeship (where the published typical duration of the apprenticeship standard is less than 12 months), or on a foundation apprenticeship, this payment will be generated 242 days after the apprentice’s learning start date instead. (Note: if the apprentice is on an apprenticeship standard where the published typical duration is 12 months or more, but they complete their apprenticeship in less than 12 months, then this final instalment will not be made).

128.3. Where a break in learning occurs, please refer to paragraph 311.2.

129. The care leavers’ bursary payment, due to the apprentice, will be generated (and paid via the provider) as follows:

129.1. 60 days after the apprentice’s learning start date, £1,000 will be paid if the apprentice is still undertaking their apprenticeship;

129.2. 120 days after the apprentice’s learning start date, £1,000 will be paid if the apprentice is still undertaking their apprenticeship; and

129.3. 300 days after the apprentice’s learning start date, £1,000 will be paid if the apprentice is still undertaking their apprenticeship.

129.3.1 Where the apprentice is on a shorter apprenticeship (where the published typical duration of the apprenticeship standard is less than 12 months), or on a foundation apprenticeship, this payment will be generated 242 days after the apprentice’s learning start date instead. (Note: if the apprentice is on an apprenticeship standard where the published typical duration is 12 months or more, but they complete their apprenticeship prior to day 300, then this final instalment will not be made – however, please refer to paragraph 130.1 for instances where the apprentice goes on to undertake another apprenticeship).

129.4. Where a change in circumstances or a break in learning occurs, please refer to paragraphs 130.1 and 311.3.

130. The care leavers’ bursary is a one-off claim. An eligible apprentice must only receive the bursary once.

130.1. Where an apprentice, who is eligible to receive a bursary of £3,000, leaves, or completes, their apprenticeship before receiving the full bursary, they will still be entitled to further payments on a new apprenticeship until they have received £3,000 in total.

131. The provider must pass the payments on, in full, to the employer and / or apprentice within 30 working days of receiving the funding from us. Where an apprentice is employed by a Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agency (FJAA), any applicable employer additional payment must be paid to the FJAA.

132. Where the provider has been unable to pass the additional payment onto the employer (for example, in instances where the employer has not responded to at least three requests for their bank details over a period of three months) then this payment must be returned to us. On the Earnings Adjustment Statement (EAS) the provider will need to enter the payment as a negative Authorised Claim. The adjustment type would be "Authorised Claims - Additional payments for employer". Information can be found in the EAS Guidance.

Evidence requirements

- Before any payment is claimed for and paid there is confirmation of eligibility for any additional payment and / or care leaver bursary. This includes (1) confirmation of age; (2) a signed letter or email confirmation from a local authority confirming the individual's care leaver status (this does not require a particular format); or (3) evidence of an education, health and care (EHC) plan where the apprentice is aged between 19 and 24 years old (Local Authority confirmation does not require a particular format; main providers should assist the apprentice in obtaining confirmation where necessary).

- For the care leavers bursary, a signed declaration by the apprentice to confirm that they: (1) understand that they are eligible for and would like to receive a bursary as a care leaver; (2) have not previously received the care leavers bursary (noting paragraph 130.1); and (3) when claiming the employer additional payment, signed consent from the apprentice that they have provided permission to share their care leaver status (or EHC plan) with their employer on their behalf.

Evidence requirements (continued)

- Evidence of payment being paid to the employer (additional payments) and / or apprentice (care leaver bursary) within the agreed timeframe:
  - For the employer additional payment this must be evidenced within the provider's financial systems (to show transaction of payment) and must include confirmation, to the employer, that this payment has been sent. (Note: we do not require the employer to invoice the provider for this payment). Where the provider has been unable to pass this payment to the employer (see paragraph 132), the provider must evidence the attempts they have made and confirm that the payment has been returned to us.
  - For the care leaver bursary this must be evidenced within the provider's financial systems (to show transaction of payment) and must include confirmation from the apprentice, that each payment has been received.

Apprenticeship hiring payment for non-levy employers

New for 1 August 2026

From October 2026, non-levy paying employers will be able to get a hiring payment of £2000 when recruiting new apprentices aged 16 to 24. This will apply to those starting an apprenticeship from 1 October 2026, providing they have started their job with their employer within the past 90 days. The payment will be in two instalments, and the employer will be eligible for the first payment once the learner has completed the first 90 days of their apprenticeship. We will provide further information in the next version of these funding rules.

New for 1 August 2026 – Version 1

133 to 141 **Policy Update:** We have included the funding rules for the apprenticeship hiring payment for non-levy employers.

New for 1 August 2026 – Version 2

133 **Clarification:** We have clarified that the apprenticeship hiring payment for non-levy employers is applicable to foundation apprenticeships.

133. Employers who do not pay the apprenticeship levy (see glossary definition of non-levy paying employer) will receive a hiring payment of £2,000 if, at the start

of the apprenticeship training the apprentice (including those undertaking a foundation apprenticeship (see paragraph 170)):

133.1. is aged between 16 and 24 years old (or 15 years of age if the apprentice's 16th birthday is between the last Friday of June and 31 August);

133.2. has an apprenticeship agreement containing a practical period start date from 1 October 2026 onwards (see paragraph 72.4);

133.3. is included in the PAYE scheme added to the employer's apprenticeship service account used to fund the apprenticeship training; and

133.4. has not been employed by that employer for more than 90 days before their practical period start date (see paragraphs 22 and 23).

133.4.1 Apprentices who have an employment start date of 1 or 2 July 2026 will be eligible if they start their apprenticeship training by 1 October 2026.

134. If you are a receiving employer who does not pay the levy and are using transferred funds to pay for the apprenticeship training for an apprentice, you will be eligible for the hiring payment providing you meet all of the eligibility criteria (see paragraph 133).

135. The apprenticeship hiring payment for non-levy employers is subject to wider policy considerations and we reserve the right to change or withdraw it during the funding year.

135.1. If we need to change or withdraw this product, we will provide at least three months' notice and we will continue to make payments in respect of any existing eligible apprentices.

Payments

136. Before we make hiring payments to providers, we will validate employer HMRC PAYE data against data provided to us by the provider through the ILR. If this data shows an apprentice is ineligible, or data has not been provided to enable us to validate eligibility, we will not make the payment.

136.1. The employer must ensure the correct PAYE scheme has been added to the apprenticeship service account against which the apprentice's National Insurance Number (from the ILR) will be checked against HMRC data. The apprentice will need to be confirmed as employed by the correct employer to be eligible.

137. These hiring payments for non-levy paying employers will be generated, (and paid via the provider, in the month following eligibility being met) as follows:

137.1. 90 days after the apprentice’s learning start date, 50% will be paid if the apprentice is still employed by them and undertaking their apprenticeship (in learning as evidenced by the ILR); and

137.2. 365 days after the apprentice’s learning start date, the remaining 50% will be paid if the apprentice is still employed by them and undertaking their apprenticeship (in learning as evidenced by the ILR).

137.2.1 Where the apprentice is on a shorter apprenticeship (where the published typical duration of the apprenticeship standard is less than 12 months), or on a foundation apprenticeship, this payment will be generated 242 days after the apprentice’s learning start date instead. (Note: if the apprentice is on an apprenticeship standard where the published typical duration is 12 months or more, but they complete their apprenticeship in less than 12 months, then this final instalment will not be made).

138. The provider must pass the payments on, in full, to the employer within 30 working days of receiving the funding from us. Where an apprentice is employed by an eligible non-levy paying Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agency (FJAA), the applicable employer payment must be paid to the FJAA.

139. Where the provider has been unable to pass the payment onto the employer (for example, in instances where the employer has not responded to at least three requests for their bank details over a period of three months) then this payment must be returned to us. On the Earnings Adjustment Statement (EAS) the provider will need to enter the payment as a negative Authorised Claim. The adjustment type would be "Authorised Claims - Additional payments for employer". Information can be found in the EAS Guidance.

Change of circumstance

140. Where a break in learning occurs, please refer to paragraph 311.2.

140.1. If an apprentice is on a break in learning when a payment is due, the payment will be delayed until the apprentice resumes their apprenticeship and has reached an overall total of 90 or 365 days in learning.

140.1.1 Where an apprentice is on a shorter apprenticeship (where the published typical duration of the apprenticeship standard is less than 12 months), or on a foundation apprenticeship, the payment will be delayed until the apprentice resumes their apprenticeship and has reached an overall total of 90 or 242 days in learning.

141. Where an employer has already received one instalment of the payment and the apprentice subsequently changes employer to continue the same apprenticeship, the new employer will be eligible to receive the remaining balance providing they meet all the eligibility criteria.

Evidence requirements

The evidence must include in respect of each hiring payment received:

- confirmation of the apprentice's date of birth
- a copy of the apprenticeship agreement which confirms the practical period start date as on or after 1 October 2026
- Payment to the employer must be evidenced within the provider's financial systems (to show transaction of payment) and must include confirmation, to the employer, that this payment has been sent. (Note: we do not require the employer to invoice the provider for this payment). Where the provider has been unable to pass this payment to the employer, the provider must evidence the attempts they have made and confirm that the payment has been returned to us.

End-point assessments

New for 1 August 2026

In February 2025, the Government announced reforms to apprenticeship assessment and published a new set of assessment principles.

These changes will apply to all apprenticeships, at all levels. Existing assessment plans continue to be rewritten on a standard-by-standard basis.

Updates to reflect the reforms to apprenticeships assessment are provided separately at Annex B alongside further guidance here.

142. The main provider (in consultation with the employer) must ensure that the apprentice is prepared for and understands the end-point assessment process.

143. Engagement of the end-point assessment organisation (EPAO) can be at any time in the apprenticeship. However, at least 6 months before the apprentice reaches gateway, the main provider (or the employer if they have chosen to undertake this role) must:

143.1. Select an organisation to deliver the end-point assessment;

143.2. Negotiate a price with the EPAO.

143.2.1 The cost of the end-point assessment will vary between standards and we expect providers (or employers if they have chosen to undertake this role) to negotiate with assessment organisations to secure value for money. The cost of the end-point assessment should not exceed 20% of the funding band maximum.

143.2.2 If the overall price of the apprenticeship is more than the funding band maximum for the standard, then the employer must pay in full the difference between the band maximum and the total negotiated price.

144. The employer and provider must ensure that the price agreed for the end-point assessment, or costs claimed for the apprenticeship includes the amount that has been negotiated with the EPAO.

145. The provider must contract with the EPAO and lead the relationship with them, including where the delivery of apprenticeship training is subcontracted. This allows the provider to make payment to the end-point assessment organisation conducting the end-point assessment.

145.1. Once a contractual agreement is in place, the provider must record the selected EPAO in the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) for every apprentice.

146. The written agreement between the provider and the EPAO must include the following:

146.1. The arrangements for sharing relevant information about the apprentice to ensure end-point assessment and certification can take place. This information must be presented to the EPAO when it is due.

146.2. Arrangements for any re-takes and payments;

146.3. Arrangements for a change of circumstances, which may delay, or lead to the cancellation of, the end-point assessment.

147. An apprentice can only take their end-point assessment after:

147.1. They have met the minimum duration of the apprenticeship (see paragraph 77).

147.2. They have satisfied the gateway requirements set out in its assessment plan (including any specific duration criteria); and

147.3. Their employer (in consultation with the main provider) is content they have attained sufficient skills, knowledge and behaviours to successfully complete the apprenticeship.

148. The apprentice must be employed until the end-point assessment is completed. Consideration must be given to the potential time needed for any re-sit and / or re-training prior to re-taking the end-point assessment so the apprentice remains employed during this time.

148.1. The only exception is where the apprentice has been made redundant and we are funding the apprenticeship to completion. In this case, any main provider responsible for the completion of the training can act as a proxy employer for the purposes of providing any required employer competency statement. This does not mean the main provider records themselves as the employer in the ILR.

148.2. Where an apprentice has changed employer after they have completed all the training and reached gateway, including where the new job role is not related to the apprenticeship, the apprentice may complete the end-point assessment in agreement with the end-point assessment organisation and the provider, so long as the end-point assessment can be successfully delivered and funded.

148.2.1 Providers must contact apprenticeship service support to get approval to report this change to us and to receive the technical details for claiming the completion payment.

149. Once assessment has started, any change of EPAO must be agreed, with both the employer and provider providing the satisfactory withdrawal from the original end-point assessment organisation as per the contractual agreement. The employer (or provider in agreement with the employer) may choose to re-negotiate the price of the end-point assessment with the new EPAO. However, if the overall price is more than the maximum funding band for the standard, then the employer must pay in full the difference between the band maximum and the total negotiated price.

150. Although both the employer and the main provider will be involved in administrative arrangements for assessment, the end point assessment itself must be independent (subject to paragraph 153 below). Some assessment

plans give the employer and the provider specific roles but, except for integrated standards, training providers who have delivered the training cannot assess their own learners.

151. The EPAO, and the awarding body in the case of mandatory qualifications, must ensure that the assessment methods, involve someone from the occupation in the delivery and grading decision who has not been involved in the training element of the apprenticeship.

152. Where an apprentice wishes to move to a standard with a revised assessment plan, providers must follow the ‘Changing to a new version of a standard following assessment reform’ rules (see paragraphs 397 to 415).

End-point assessment process for integrated standards

153. The end-point assessment organisation for an integrated degree standard may be a higher education training provider or a professional body. If the training provider is also acting as the EPAO for an integrated degree, in order to remain independent, the assessment must involve someone from the occupation in the delivery and grading decision who has not been involved in the training element of the apprenticeship.

    153.1. Validation arrangements for integrated degrees may be considered and assessed within external quality assurance processes.

    153.2. For HEIs based outside of England, the provider will be granted access to the APAR in the usual manner for the purposes of providing training. For the purpose of the EPA for integrated degrees, Skills England will be responsible for ensuring External Quality Assurance arrangements are in place.

154. Delivery of new learning must not take place during the end-point assessment period.

Certification

155. The end-point assessment organisation (or the provider, in the case of an integrated standard) is responsible for claiming the apprenticeship completion certificate from us (including for those apprentices who are not funded by us and recorded in the ILR under Funding Model 99).

156. The end-point assessment organisation must not claim the apprenticeship completion certificate from us until they have received evidence from the provider that the apprentice has met all the requirements of the apprenticeship including English and / or maths where applicable.

157. Where applicable the provider must apply for, and give, apprentice's certificates from awarding organisations for achieving a mandatory qualification, and ensure they keep a copy of this in the evidence pack.

Evidence requirements

The provider must have:

- Evidence of the written agreement with, and payments made to, the EPAO for conducting the end-point assessment where appropriate.
- Records and evidence of completion of the end-point assessment. This must be available within 3 months of providers reporting it in the ILR. Evidence of completion would include:
  - Signed statement by employer and provider that the apprentice is still employed until the end-point assessment is completed;
  - Evidence from the EPAO that the EPA has been attempted and either a) achieved and the certificate claimed (this could include a screenshot from the EPAO portal); or b) failed (and no resit taken).

Foundation apprenticeships

New for 1 August 2026

162 **Clarification:** To confirm that where the apprentice does not give consent to share the information as stated in paragraph 161, then this apprentice will be ineligible for funding and must not be placed on a foundation apprenticeship.

New for 1 August 2026 – Version 2

170 **Clarification:** To confirm that for eligible apprentices, employers who do not pay the levy will receive the new hiring payment.

Overview

158. This section covers those aspects of the foundation apprenticeship programme that differ from other apprenticeship programmes. For elements not covered in this section, please refer to the relevant sections throughout this document.

159. Foundation apprenticeships have their own occupational standards; details of these can be found on Skills England's website.

Learner eligibility

160. In order to access funds in the employer's apprenticeship service account or government-employer co-investment, the provider must ensure that at the start of their foundation apprenticeship training, the apprentice is:

160.1. Aged between 16 and 21 years old (or 15 years of age if the apprentice's birthday is between the last Friday of June and 31 August); or

160.2. Aged between 22 and 24 years old and has either an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan provided by their local authority and / or has been, or are, in the care of their location authority as defined in paragraph 127.3; or

160.3. Aged between 22 and 24 years old and is either a prisoner (see paragraph 73.4) or is a prison leaver.

161. For apprentices aged between 22 and 24 years old, providers must ensure that the apprentice is informed that their employer will be made aware that they either:

161.1. have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan; or

161.2. have been, or are, in the care of their local authority; or

161.3. are a prisoner or have been in prison

162. Where apprentices do not give consent to share this information with their employer, they will be ineligible for funding so must not be placed on a foundation apprenticeship. Providers should look at other apprenticeships (i.e. a non-foundation apprenticeship) which enables this information to remain confidential.

163. All other eligibility criteria for apprentices can be found within paragraphs 29 to 34.

Programme eligibility

164. When undertaking the initial assessment, providers must ensure that a foundation apprenticeship is the most suitable apprenticeship programme for the learner (taking into account any recognition of prior learning).

165. We will fund an apprentice to undertake a foundation apprenticeship at the same or lower level than a qualification they already hold, if the foundation apprenticeship will allow the individual to acquire significant new knowledge,

skills and behaviours, the provider can show that the content of the training is materially different from any prior qualification or previous apprenticeship and that the minimum duration can still be met once prior learning has been recognised.

Support for English and maths training

166. Where the apprentice is aged 16-18 and does not already hold a level 2 qualification in English and / or maths, then the provider must adopt the following approach and can claim funding in the following scenarios:

166.1. Where the apprentice does not hold level 1 (Functional Skills level 1 or GCSE D to G or 3 to 1) or level 2 (Functional Skills level 2 or GCSE A* to C or 9 to 5), then the apprentice must start and continue to study for at least a level 1 English and / or maths (Functional Skills level 1 or GCSE grade 3 to 1).

166.2. Where the apprentices already holds an approved level 1 qualification, then the apprentice must start and continue to study for a level 2 English and / or maths (Functional Skills level 2 and GCSE grade 9 to 4).

166.3. Under both scenarios the apprentice is not required to take the assessment(s) prior to completing their foundation apprenticeship, however where providers deem it appropriate (for example, the apprentice is ready to take and pass the test) the assessment(s) can be taken.

167. Where the apprentice is age 19-24, please refer to paragraph 50.

168. Where it is agreed that the apprentice will study towards English and / or maths, providers must ensure active learning for English and / or maths takes place in line with the signed training plan. Where the apprentice is aged 16-18 the plan must include a minimum of 55 guided learning hours per subject (this is in addition to the hours required for off-the-job training).

168.1. The only exception to this is where it has been identified, within the initial assessment, that due to prior knowledge the learner requires less than 55 guided learning hours in order to be ready to take and pass the assessment(s) (see paragraph 166.3) – in these instances this must be documented on their training plan.

Additional payments

169. For eligible apprentices, the provider and the employer will receive an additional £1,000 payment towards the additional cost associated with training – see paragraphs 125 and 128 for eligibility and payment dates.

170. For eligible apprentices, employers who do not pay the levy will receive the £2,000 new hiring payment – see paragraphs 133 to 137 for eligibility criteria and payment dates.

171. Eligible apprentices will also receive the care leavers' bursary – see paragraphs 127 and 129 for eligibility and payment dates.

172. Where a foundation apprenticeship attracts an employer incentive (as identified within the standard on the Skills England website), payments will be generated (and paid via the provider) as follows:

172.1. 90 days after the apprentice's learning start date, £667 will be paid if the apprentice is still undertaking their foundation apprenticeship;

172.2. 242 days after the apprentice's learning start date, £667 will be paid if the apprentice is still undertaking their foundation apprenticeship

172.3. A progression payment of £666 will be paid if the apprentice, upon completion of their foundation apprenticeship:

172.3.1 starts a new apprenticeship (which is not a foundation apprenticeship) within 6 months of their completion date; and

172.3.2 remains with the same employer (they stay on the same employers AS account as per their foundation apprenticeship)

172.3.3 This payment will be made 90 days after the apprentice's learning start date (on their new apprenticeship), if they are still undertaking that apprenticeship

172.4. Where an apprentice has a break in learning, please refer to paragraphs 311.2 to 311.3 to see how this will impact these payment dates.

173. The provider must pass the payments on, in full, to the employer within 30 working days of receiving the funding from us. Where a foundation apprentice is employed by a Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agency (FJAA), these payments must be paid to the FJAA.

174. Where there is a change of employer, or change of circumstances, please refer to paragraphs 176 to 187 to see how this impacts the incentive payments.

Change in circumstance

175. Where a 16–17-year-old apprentice is at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training), providers must:

175.1. Offer IAG support to any apprentice who is at risk of withdrawing from their foundation apprenticeship earlier or who is at risk of not remaining in employment following completion of their programme.

175.1.1 This also includes both education and local employment opportunities.

175.2. Comply with their statutory duty to notify the relevant local authority of any 16-17-year-old who is no longer participating in training and is at risk of becoming NEET (this will enable them to access the local authority support systems).

Actions to take where the apprentice changes employer but continues the same foundation apprenticeship with the same provider

176. Additional payments and incentive payments stop for the first employer, but they will retain any eligible payments already made. The number of days in learning with the first employer are added to the days in learning with the new employer to calculate when subsequent payments are due.

177. Any employer co-investment due from the first employer must be reconciled by the provider, with any overpayment, or underpayment, of co-investment being addressed.

Actions to take where the apprentice withdraws from the foundation apprenticeship (not via redundancy) prior to completion

178. Additional payments and incentive payments stop for the employer and provider, but they will retain any eligible payments already made.

179. Any employer co-investment due from the employer must be reconciled by the provider, with any overpayment, or underpayment, of co-investment being addressed.

180. The provider must issue the apprentice with a ‘summary of training’ document which evidences the training that the apprentice has undertaken to the point of withdrawal. See evidence requirements for what information needs to be captured in this document.

Actions to take where the employer selects a different provider but the foundation apprenticeship remains the same

181. The original provider will retain any eligible provider additional payments already made. Any remaining provider additional payments not paid to the original provider can be paid to the new provider. The number of days in

learning with the original provider are added to the days in learning with the new provider to calculate when subsequent payments are due.

182. Any employer co-investment due from the employer, for the period of training delivered, must be reconciled by the original main provider. Any overpayment, or underpayment, of co-investment must be addressed.

183. The original provider must issue the employer with a ‘summary of training’ document which evidences the training that the apprentice has undertaken to the point of changing providers. See evidence requirements for what information needs to be captured in this document.

Actions to take where the apprentice moves to a different apprenticeship programme prior to completing their foundation apprenticeship

184. Additional payments and incentive payments stop for the employer and provider, but they will retain any eligible payments already made.

185. The provider must issue the apprentice and / or employer with a ‘summary of training’ document which evidences the training that the apprentice has undertaken to the point of withdrawal. See evidence requirements for what information needs to be captured in this document.

186. Any employer co-investment due from the employer, for the period of training delivered for the original foundation apprenticeship, must be reconciled by the provider. Any overpayment, or underpayment, of co-investment must be addressed.

187. Eligibility for employer incentive payments (see paragraph 172) and / or additional payments (see paragraphs 169 to 171) will be determined by the apprentice’s age at the start of their next apprenticeship (noting that employer incentive payments are only for foundation apprenticeships).

Evidence requirements

Providers must refer to each section of the funding rules, which provide full details of the evidence requirements. This section highlights the extra evidence requirements that are necessary for claiming funding for foundation apprenticeships.

The provider must retain evidence of an individual's eligibility, including:

- Confirmation that the learner is eligible for funding for a foundation apprenticeship:
    - confirmation of the apprentice's date of birth
    - evidence of an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, where applicable
    - a signed letter or email confirmation from a local authority confirming the individual's care leaver status, where applicable
        - plus a signed declaration by the apprentice to confirm that they: (1) understand that they are eligible for and would like to receive a bursary as a care leaver; (2) have not previously received the care leavers bursary (noting paragraph 130.1); and (3) when claiming the employer additional payment, signed consent from the apprentice that they have provided permission to share their care leaver status (or EHC plan) with their employer on their behalf.
    - for prisoners, confirmation from the employer that a completed and signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is in place
    - for prison leavers, a self-declaration from the apprentice
- The provider must confirm, after completing the initial assessment, that both the individual and the programme are eligible for funding and that a foundation apprenticeship is the right programme for the individual.

For apprentices aged 16-18 who are undertaking English and / or maths, the provider must:

- detail the plans for English and / or maths active learning to take place in line with the signed training plan
- document the hours that have been delivered to ensure this meets the minimum number of hours

Evidence requirements

Providers must retain evidence of additional payments and incentive payments being paid to the employer within the agreed timeframes:

- This must be evidenced within the provider's financial systems (to show transaction of payment) and must include confirmation, to the employer, that this payment has been sent. (Note: we do not require the employer to invoice the provider for this payment). Where the provider has been unable to pass this payment to the employer, the provider must evidence the attempts they have made and confirm that the payment has been returned to us.
- For the progression payment (where applicable), in addition to the above, evidence that the learner has remained with the same employer and started their next apprenticeship within 6 months of completing their foundation apprenticeship.

For the care leaver bursary this must be evidenced within the provider's financial systems (to show transaction of payment) and must include confirmation from the apprentice, that each payment has been received.

Where an apprentice, aged 16-17-years old, is at risk of becoming NEET, the provider must evidence they have offered IAG support and have complied with the statutory duty of notifying the relevant local authority.

Where an apprentice withdraws before completion, moves onto a different apprenticeship programme or changes main providers whilst on-programme, the provider must evidence that they have issued a 'summary of training' document to the relevant party / parties. This document must confirm:

- details of the apprentice;
- details of the foundation apprenticeship (subject, start date and planned end date);
- percentage of the foundation apprenticeship that has been completed;
- a summary of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that the apprentice has developed and evidenced during their time on their foundation apprenticeship.
- in the case of the foundation apprenticeship having a mandatory qualification, then the details of the qualification, or units thereof, achieved.

Paying for an apprenticeship

Funds in an employer's apprenticeship service account

New for 1 August 2026

190 **Clarification:** To confirm that the 20% completion payment is not aligned to the assessment costs.

New for 1 August 2026 – Version 2

189.2 **Policy update:** Removed reference to our monthly payments being matched with equivalent employer co-investment payments.

190 **Policy update:** Removed reference to the employer co-investment having to be collected and recorded on the ILR in order for the completion payment to be released.

188. All new apprentice starts must be funded through the apprenticeship service.

188.1. An employer who does not pay the levy can reserve funds using the apprenticeship service or receive a levy transfer to access apprenticeship funding.

189. Funding for an apprenticeship is determined by whether there are levy funds available in an employer's apprenticeship service account each month. In any particular month:

189.1. If levy funds are available in an employer's account, we will pay the provider 80% of the total negotiated price (TNP1 and TNP2) up to the funding band maximum, in equal monthly instalments according to the planned duration of the apprenticeship, regardless of how training is scheduled over the duration of the apprenticeship.

189.2. If the employer does not have levy funds in their apprenticeship account (non-levy payers and levy payers with insufficient funds), we will pay the provider 80% of the government co-investment funding in equal monthly instalments (up to the funding band maximum) according to the planned duration of the apprenticeship, regardless of how training is scheduled over the duration of the apprenticeship.

190. For completions on or after 1 August 2026, we will pay the remaining balance (the completion payment) of the total negotiated price, up to the funding band maximum, to the provider when the apprentice has undertaken all the activity

relevant to the apprenticeship, including completing all elements of the end-point assessment. NB: The completion payment is not aligned to the assessment costs.

191. Deductions from the employer’s apprenticeship service account will mirror these payments where funds are available.

Use of an employer’s apprenticeship service account

New for 1 August 2026

192.3 Clarification: To confirm that the PAYE scheme used to pay apprentices must be declared in the employer’s apprenticeship service account.

193 Clarification: To confirm that we may ask employers to provide evidence about the PAYE scheme that their apprentices are declared on.

195.1 Clarification: To confirm that in order for a reconciliation to take place changes must be actioned within the current funding year (by the final ILR submission) – any changes made in a previous funding year will not automatically be paid.

197 Clarification: To confirm that this also includes third parties not being able to access or operate payments in an employer’s apprenticeship service account.

New for 1 August 2026 – Version 1

195 Update: This rule has been updated to take into account the revised process under which providers record the learner and training details to the ILR, this data is then shown in the employer’s apprenticeship service account – employer must review and approve these records in order to access funding.

192. Employers must only add PAYE schemes for themselves or their connected companies or charities (according to HMRC’s definition) to their apprenticeship service account.

192.1. Public bodies cannot usually be connected for apprenticeship levy purposes. If an employer is a public body, they must only add the PAYE scheme or schemes for one employer, that is, a government department, local authority, or non-ministerial department.

192.2. There are some exceptions where public bodies are considered to be corporate bodies, companies, or charities. If an organisation is connected, as defined by HMRC employment allowance connection rules and shares one apprenticeship levy allowance, then an account could be set up with another connected employer.

192.3. The PAYE scheme used to pay apprentices must be declared in the apprenticeship service account. If a new scheme is used to pay apprentices, then this must be added.

193. We will monitor accounts to check that PAYE schemes are properly used. If we have any questions, we may ask employers to provide evidence that the employers sharing an apprenticeship service account are connected. We may additionally ask employers to provide evidence about the PAYE scheme that apprentices are declared on in the apprenticeship service account.

194. Employers must:

194.1. Remove PAYE schemes from their apprenticeship service account that are no longer operational or not operated by the employer associated with the account (or leaves the group of connected companies);

194.2. Manage users associated with their account including:

194.2.1 Ensuring that individuals who are employed, or acting on behalf of the provider, are not given access to the employer's apprenticeship service account;

194.2.2 Controlling who can add users; and

194.2.3 Removing users who are not authorised to act on their behalf.

195. Employers can send a learning request or give the provider permission to enter the apprentice details (via their provider account) on their behalf. To be funded from the apprenticeship service account, providers will add the learner and training details to the ILR, however employers must review and approve these apprentice details within their apprenticeship service account before funding is released. Provider payments will only be made once the employer approval has been completed.

195.1. If we withhold payments to the provider because the data has not been approved by the employer, we will reconcile the payments due to the provider when the data matches and make the corresponding changes within the apprenticeship service account. For a reconciliation to take place these changes must be actioned within the current funding year (by the final ILR submission) – any changes made in a previous funding year will not automatically be paid.

196. Provider must not have access to an employer's apprenticeship service account, unless operating as an employer-provider.

197. Employers must not allow any third party to access, operate or authorise payments through their apprenticeship service account.

198. Employers are responsible for making accurate declarations to HMRC that we will use to manage their apprenticeship service account. If, as a result of retrospective changes to the amount of apprenticeship levy declared to HMRC, there is an overpayment by us to the provider, we may ask employers to pay us the employer co-investment value based on the rate in place when the apprenticeship training started - we will provide employers with details of this as required.

198.1. Where there would have been insufficient funds in the employer's apprenticeship service account, we will take responsibility for these payments and the employer will be required to pay co-investment direct to us. If this happens, we will provide details of the co-investment value to providers, as this may be needed for accounting purposes.

199. Employers whose organisation is subject to structural changes, including mergers and acquisitions, must contact us to inform us of these changes.

Reservation of funds by non-levy employers

New for 1 August 2026

200.1 Clarification: To confirm that employers can give providers permission to reserve funds on their behalf.

201 Clarification: To confirm that we only expect reservations to be backdated by exception.

200. Employers, who do not pay the levy, can reserve funds using the apprenticeship service to access apprenticeship funding. More information on reservation of funds can be found in the guidance on GOV.UK.

200.1. Employers can give providers permission to reserve funds on their behalf (see paragraph 195)

201. Employers who are planning to use reserved funds to fund an apprentice, should reserve funds in advance of recruitment, or an offer of an apprenticeship being made to an existing employee. In cases where that is not possible, employers must reserve funds within one calendar month of the apprenticeship

starting (i.e., the reservation can be backdated by one calendar month) – however, we expect this to only happen in exceptional cases.

202. Reservations can only be used for:

202.1. New apprenticeship starts; and

202.2. Re-starts where the apprenticeship was previously funded via contracted provision and following redundancy, or provider failure, needs to be funded via a reservation to allow an apprentice to continue / complete their apprenticeship with a new employer.

203. Reserved funds are classed as government-employer co-investment and all rules associated with government-employer co-investment must be followed when using reserved funds; please see paragraphs 212 to 219.

204. Providers will need to agree the funding type (for employers who do not pay the levy this would be a reservation or a levy transfer) prior to submitting their ILR, so that funds can be reserved (for a start or re-start).

205. Reservations will expire if they are not used within 3 months of the start date detailed within the reservation. If the reservation expires before the apprentice starts, the employer (or provider if they have been given permission) must make a new reservation.

206. If a change of circumstance occurs that results in the need for a new reservation on the apprenticeship service, the employer (or the provider) must contact apprenticeship service support.

The price of an apprenticeship

New for 1 August 2026

207 **Update:** This rule has been moved from the subcontracting section.

208 **Policy change:** To aid simplification the contract for services (with the employer) can now be at programme level (rather than learner level); this will mean fewer updates.

208.1 **Policy change:** To aid simplification there is no longer a requirement to break down the price in the contract for services into the eligible cost areas. The provider must however include a statement that the funding will only be used directly on eligible costs.

210 **Clarification:** Learner level pricing will now be managed through the ILR and apprenticeship service.

211.1 **Clarification:** We have provided further information around the use of TNP2 estimates, the acceptable sources of the data used and how often this information must be updated. We would remind providers that they only need to update TNP2 information where they are using an estimate; they still have the option to leave this field blank until a price has been confirmed with the EPAO.

211.3 **Policy change:** We have removed the need for the employer to approve a different split between TNP1 and TNP2. The employer will only need to approve a price change where the total price increases. This applies to new starts and continuing learners where the price change occurs on or after 1 August 2026.

- **Update:** The previous rule that said the agreed price that is entered into the ILR and the apprenticeship service must be the same has been removed as a result of the payment simplification project (entering data once).

New for 1 August 2026 – Version 2

211.1 **Clarification:** TNP1 must only contain the cost of training (see paragraphs 106 to 110).

207. Funding for all elements of each apprenticeship will be routed through a single provider that the employer has chosen; this includes funding for English and maths.

208. The provider must agree a contract for services with the employer and this must include the funding band (or total price if less) for the programme and details of the co-investment policy which applies (if applicable).

208.1. There is no requirement to break down the price into the eligible cost areas (see paragraphs 106 to 110) but the provider must include a statement in the contract to confirm that the funding band will only be used directly on eligible costs

208.2. The funding band and any agreed price does not include VAT (although VAT may be charged on employer co-investment).

209. The funding bands and the standards placed within them, may be subject to change. Any change will only apply to new starts and not apply to apprentices already engaged on the apprenticeship.

210. The provider must record learner level pricing on the ILR and this will subsequently be agreed by the employer through their apprenticeship service account.

210.1. Any savings from the recognition of prior learning or from further price negotiation (e.g. due to cohort size) must come from within the funding band.

210.2. If the true cost of delivery exceeds the funding band maximum (before any deductions for prior learning have been made), the provider must agree off-line (outside of the ILR and apprenticeship service) how the employer will pay this difference. We do not need to know about the amount of this difference and VAT can be charged on this amount. This difference must not be funded from the apprenticeship service account or co-investment.

211. The provider must split the learner level price on the ILR, between TNP1 (the cost of training) and TNP2 (the cost of assessment).

211.1. TNP1 must only contain the cost of training (see paragraphs 106 to 110).

211.2. Where the details of the end-point assessment organisation and price are not known at the start of the apprenticeship, these must be entered once they have been confirmed. The TNP2 field in the ILR must be left blank until the price of the end-point assessment has been confirmed to ensure accuracy.

211.2.1 If a provider chooses to enter estimate data in TNP2 (i.e. before a price has been confirmed in a contract with the EPAO), they must only do so if they have credible evidence on which to base this estimate (e.g. a current price list);

estimates that are based on no credible source must not be used.

211.2.2 This estimate must be confirmed (and updated where necessary) once the price is agreed with the EPAO (see paragraph 143 for timing of update and the requirement for a contract for services with the EPAO). There is no requirement to update this field at any other time.

211.3. Any subsequent changes to the learner level price (either TNP1 or TNP2) must be recorded in the ILR in a timely manner. The employer will only need to approve these changes, through their apprenticeship service account, if the total programme price increases; they will not need to approve a change to the split between TNP1 and TNP2. This applies to new starts and to continuing learners (where the price change occurs on or after 1 August 2026).

211.4. We will monitor changes of price and patterns of behaviour to identify any fraudulent activity.

Evidence requirements

The provider has:

- Agreed a contract for services with the employer that complies with paragraph 180. This has been signed and dated by both parties.
- Recorded learner level pricing in the ILR, taking account of the RPL policy (see paragraphs 35 to 39).
- Split the learner level price between TNP1 and TNP2. TNP1 only contains the cost of training. TNP2 has been left blank where the detail of the end-point assessment organisation and price is not known. If the provider has chosen to enter an estimated price against advice, this must be based on credible source material (see paragraph 211.2.1) and updated as required. TNP2 funds may be at risk if a credible source for a TNP2 estimate cannot be demonstrated. The confirmed TNP2 price must match the agreed contract with the EPAO.
- Recorded any subsequent changes to the TNP1 / TNP2 in the ILR.

Employer co-investment

New for 1 August 2026

213 **Policy update:** For new starts from 1 August 2026 where a levy payer has insufficient funds in their AS account, the employer co-investment rate will be 25%.

213 **Policy update:** For new starts from 1 August 2026 where an employer does not pay the levy and the apprentice is aged 25 or above (at the start of their apprenticeship training), the employer co-investment rate will be 5%.

214 **Policy update:** For new starts from 1 August 2026, where an employer does not pay the apprenticeship levy, government will fund all the apprenticeship training and assessment costs (up to the funding band maximum) for those apprentices who are aged between 16 and 24 years old (or 15 years of age if the apprentice's 16th birthday is between the last Friday of June and 31 August) at the start of their apprenticeship training.

New for 1 August 2026 – Version 2

213 **Update:** We have changed the terminology to focus on what the government will contribute towards the training and assessment costs.

~ **Policy Update:** We have removed references to the completion payment being withheld if the employer co-investment is not collected and recorded in the ILR.

New for 1 August 2026 – Version 3

213.1 **Policy Update:** To confirm that for new starts from 1 August 2026 where a levy payer has insufficient funds in their AS account and the apprentice is aged 25 or over (at the start of their apprenticeship training), the government will fund 75% of the training and assessment costs (up to the funding band maximum).

214.2 **Policy Update:** To confirm that for new starts from 1 August 2026 where a levy payer has insufficient funds in their AS account, government will fund all the training and assessment costs (up to the funding band maximum) for those apprentices who are aged between 16 and 24 years old (or 15 years of age if the apprentice's 16th birthday is between the last Friday of June and 31 August) at the start of their apprenticeship training.

212. Employers who do not pay the apprenticeship levy, and levy paying employers with insufficient funds, must co-invest the relevant amount of the total

negotiated price, up to the funding band maximum, towards the cost of the apprenticeship training and assessment.

213. For apprenticeships that start on or after 1 August 2026, the government will contribute the following:

213.1. For levy paying employers who have insufficient funds, if at the start of their apprenticeship training the apprentice is aged 25 or over, the government will fund 75% of the training and assessment costs (up to the funding band maximum)

213.2. For employers who do not pay the levy, if at the start of their apprenticeship training the apprentice is aged 25 or over, the government will fund 95% of the training and assessment costs (up to the funding band maximum)

213.3. Providers will need to liaise with the employer directly regarding the remaining balance. Where the total negotiated price has exceeded the funding band maximum, the employer must pay all the additional costs above the funding band maximum in full.

214. In the circumstances below, for apprenticeships that start on or after 1 August 2026 the government will fund all of the apprenticeship training and assessment costs, up to the funding band maximum of the apprenticeship:

214.1. Employers who do not pay the levy, if at the start of their apprenticeship training the apprentice is aged between 16 and 24 years old (or 15 years of age if the apprentice's 16th birthday is between the last Friday of June and 31 August).

214.2. For levy paying employers who have insufficient funds, if at the start of their apprenticeship training the apprentice is aged between 16 and 24 years old (or 15 years of age if the apprentice's 16th birthday is between the last Friday of June and 31 August).

215. In the above scenarios, the provider must not request any employer contribution towards the costs of an apprenticeship, up to the funding band maximum.

215.1. However, if the total negotiated price is above the funding band maximum, then the employer is still liable to pay in full the difference between these values.

215.2. The provider must not request any employer contribution towards the cost of English and maths provision, learning support or additional payments.

215.3. Where an employer delivers to their own staff as an employer-provider, co-investment does not apply.

216. Levy accounts will be reset where no levy declarations have been made to HMRC within the previous 24 months. Where this has not been updated automatically, or if an employer disagrees with their levy / non-levy status, the employer will need to contact the Apprenticeship Service Support Desk on 08000 150 600 or email helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk.

216.1. Changes to levy / non-levy status will not be backdated, so only eligible starts from the date of change will qualify for the co-investment waiver.

217. Where an employer becomes a levy-payer during an apprenticeship, which started as a non-levy apprenticeship, levy funds available in the employer's account will be used to pay that month's instalment.

217.1. Please refer to the Apprenticeships Technical Funding guide for more information about when a change of circumstance affects the co-investment rate.

218. Where there is a change of employer (this includes apprenticeship re-starts with a new employer), please refer to the Apprenticeship Technical Funding guide as the co-investment calculation for the new employer may be dependent on a number of factors.

219. Where a change of circumstances has taken place (for example, where an employer becomes a levy-payer during an apprenticeship which started as a non-levy apprenticeship, or the apprentice has changed employer or has withdrawn from the apprenticeship) then in these instances, the employer co-investment must be reconciled and any overpayment addressed.

Evidence requirements

- Where the apprenticeship is exempt from employer co-investment, the main provider must:
    - Provide confirmation of the apprentice's date of birth

Financial contributions by an apprentice

220. The provider, or the employer, must not ask the apprentice to contribute financially to the eligible costs of training or assessment. This includes both where the individual has completed the apprenticeship successfully or has left the programme early (this includes where they have left the employer).

220.1. Costs include any co-investment or additional training and assessment costs above the funding band, that the employer has paid directly to the provider, where this is part of the agreed apprenticeship.

Evidence requirements

- There is a statement in the training plan or contract for services that the provider and the employer will not ask the apprentice to financially contribute to the eligible costs of the apprenticeship.

Qualifying days for funding

New for 1 August 2026

221 **Clarification:** We have amended 'planned end date' to 'actual end date' to reflect the position more accurately.

222 **Clarification:** We have clarified that where a learner does not complete one episode of learning, the provider must remove the learner record from the ILR.

224 **Clarification:** We have clarified the position on breaks in learning during the qualifying period.

221. To qualify for any apprenticeship funding the apprentice must be in learning for a minimum of 42 days between the learning start date and learning actual end date.

222. Where a learner does not complete one episode of learning, for example they do not attend their first class, the provider must remove the learner record from the ILR.

223. Where funding is paid for an apprentice who does not subsequently meet the relevant qualifying period, we will recover the funding from the provider. This includes any funding for learning support. Where applicable, funds will be returned to the employer's apprenticeship service account.

224. An apprentice may take a break in learning during their qualifying period as long as they have completed at least one episode of learning prior to the break (for example they have attended the first class).

224.1. When the apprentice re-starts following their break in learning, they must meet the qualifying period for the new programme aim to be eligible for funding.

Value added tax (VAT)

225. Supplies of training or end-point assessment, which are paid by government funding, including the growth and skills levy, are exempt from VAT. This includes additional payments (see paragraphs 169 to 187).

226. Providers must not include VAT in the prices they enter onto the ILR (see paragraphs 210 to 211).

227. Main providers must determine the VAT treatment on their invoices to employers.

228. We do not provide advice on VAT. Providers must always seek their own advice on VAT from HMRC if they are in any doubt about VAT treatment.

229. If main providers add VAT to invoices and the employer is VAT registered, the employer may be able to recover that VAT through its VAT returns. In determining the costs of training or end-point assessment, an employer will need to check with their main provider if VAT will be added and verify, internally or with HMRC, if it can be recovered.

Subsidy control

New for 1 August 2026

233.1 Clarification: We have clarified that public sector employers receiving transfers of levy funds do not fall within the scope of these subsidy control rules.

New for 1 August 2026 - Version 1

230 Clarification: We have clarified that the apprenticeship hiring payment for non-levy employers does not fall within the scope of subsidy control from 1 August 2026 to 31 July 2027.

233.1 Clarification: We have clarified that public sector employers (i.e. employers owned, funded, or controlled by government and to the extent they are not engaged in economic activity within the meaning of Section 7 of the Subsidy Control Act 2022) receiving transfers of levy funds do not fall within the scope of these subsidy control rules and therefore do not need to complete an MFA declaration.

230. Funds received by providers from an employer's apprenticeship service account (including government-employer co-investment, additional payments

and the apprenticeship hiring payment for non-levy employers) do not fall within the scope of subsidy control from 1 August 2026 to 31 July 2027.

231. For more information on subsidy control, please visit the [UK subsidy control regime guidance] on GOV.UK.

232. Transfers of funds between employers may engage the subsidy control rules. For any transfer an employer receives, a percentage of the transferred funds may count towards the employer’s Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) exemption. This percentage represents the amount of co-investment the employer would have otherwise had to contribute towards the apprenticeship, if funds had not been transferred.

    232.1. The provider must ensure the employer completes an MFA declaration for relevant funding they receive through transfers.

233. If providers become aware that an employer exceeds their Minimal Financial Assistance exemption of £315,000 over a rolling 3-year period, they must contact us.

    233.1. Public sector employers (i.e. employers owned, funded, or controlled by government and to the extent they are not engaged in economic activity within the meaning of Section 7 of the Subsidy Control Act 2022) receiving transfers of levy funds do not fall within the scope of these subsidy control rules and therefore do not need to complete an MFA declaration.

Evidence requirements

Where applicable (for transfers), the employer must give a Minimal Financial Assistance declaration to their provider.

Delivery models

Apprenticeships funded by transfers of levy funds

New for 1 August 2026

234 **Clarification:** To confirm that the transfer allowance covers both apprenticeships and apprenticeship units.

234.1 **Policy Update**: We have removed reference to the 10% government top up payment which will no longer be added to new funds entering levy accounts from 1 August 2026.

242 **Clarification:** To confirm how and when automated features operate within the online pledge service.

Rules for employers (including employer-providers and Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agencies)

234. Levy-paying employers can transfer a percentage of their levy funds, which were declared for the previous tax year, to other employers, including Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agencies (FJAAs). The annual transfer allowance percentage is currently set at 50% (and is based on actual transfer payments taken within the financial year) – this allowance covers transfers for both apprenticeships and apprenticeship units.

    234.1. The transfer allowance will be calculated, around the start of each tax year, and is based on the total amount of levy declared (to HMRC) during the previous tax year, with the English percentage applied. This allowance is recalculated every tax year and any unused allowance will not be carried forward.

235. If employers are part of an account with connected organisations the transfer allowance will be calculated from the total levy declared by all organisations included within the account at the time of the calculation. They will not have an individual transfer account.

236. The transfer amount should cover 100% of the eligible training and assessment costs, up to the funding band maximum, of the apprenticeship standard. This does not include English and maths training up to and including level 2, which is funded separately.

237. By agreeing to fund an apprenticeship with a transfer, levy (sending) employers are committing to fund the apprenticeship over its entire duration until

completion. Sending employers will need to ensure they do not exceed their transfer allowance and that they will have enough transfer allowance to cover these costs over the relevant number of years. Sending employers will not be able to stop payments once they have approved the apprenticeship on the apprenticeship service and transfer payments will be deducted from their levy account first, prior to their own apprenticeships.

238. Employers cannot jointly fund an apprenticeship with another levy-paying employer.

239. Transferred funds can only be used to pay for training and assessment for apprenticeship standards, for new apprenticeship starts. A transfer must be agreed and put in place before an apprentice (being funded by the transfer) starts their apprenticeship. The only exception to this is where the apprentice is changing employer and an agreement to continue their apprenticeship with their new employer is via a transfer of levy funds – this must be agreed by the point the apprentice starts with their new employer.

240. There must not be any conditions imposed on sending a transfer, such as choosing the receiving employer’s main provider or end-point assessment organisation for them. This does not include any criteria that the sending employer may have set around their transfer pledge.

241. Employers must not seek or accept any incentives or inducements, or any other payments not authorised by us in exchange for sending or receiving a transfer.

242. When a sending employer uses the online pledge service, applications that fully meet the set criteria will be automatically approved if enough transfer allowance is available. Sending employers may delay this auto-approval for 6 weeks to review their applications; after which approval will occur automatically if no action has been taken.

    242.1. Where applications do not fully meet the set criteria, sending employers have 3 months to review / action these before they are automatically declined. Employers should review their applications regularly and respond within a timely manner.

243. Once the transfer of levy funds has been processed, the responsibility and liability of the transfer funded apprenticeship lies solely with the receiving employer – this includes the quality of the apprenticeship and the employment of the apprentice(s). The sending employer has no accountability for that apprenticeship going forward, apart from the commitment to fund the apprenticeship over its entire duration until completion.

Specific rules for employers receiving a levy transfer

244. Once a transfer has been approved by the sending employer, receiving employers will have 6 weeks to accept these funds. If no action is taken, then the transfer funds will no longer be available – receiving employers would then have to apply for a new transfer should this funding still be required.

245. If the receiving employer has accepted these funds (within the 6 weeks), then they will have 3 months to use these funds, by linking the funds to an approved apprenticeship record. If no action is taken, then the transfer funds will no longer be available – receiving employers would then have to apply for a new transfer should this funding still be required.

246. Before entering the details on their apprenticeship service account, receiving employers must:

    246.1. Agree the transfer details with the sending employer (either by an approved pledge application or by a direct transfer connection);

    246.2. Agree with the main provider which apprenticeship standard the apprentice will be undertaking; and

    246.3. Confirm the price that has been negotiated with the main provider and end-point assessment organisation. All parties will need to approve these details through the apprenticeship service – in instances where the original application was auto-approved, then this stage of the process will also be automated for the sending employer.

247. Levy transfer funds may be subject to subsidy control rules. Please refer to paragraph 232 for further information.

248. For employers who either do not pay the levy or have exhausted the levy funds in their apprenticeship service account, then if at any point the 'sending' employer has insufficient funds to cover the cost of the apprenticeship training, the receiving employer will be liable to fund part of the remaining costs (see paragraph 214 for exemptions). The rate at which co-investment will need to be paid will depend on when the apprenticeship training started.

249. For levy-paying employers, if at any point the 'sending' employer has insufficient funds to cover the cost of the apprenticeship training and the receiving employer has sufficient levy funds available then these funds will automatically be used before they enter co-investment.

250. If the total negotiated price of the apprenticeship exceeds the funding band maximum, receiving employers must pay all of the additional costs.

Rules for providers

251. Providers must fully explain to the receiving employer that they may be liable to contribute to the training and assessment costs if the full cost of the apprenticeship cannot be met with a levy transfer or from funds from their apprenticeship service account (see paragraphs 212 to 215).

252. Providers can deliver training to apprentices they are funding through a transfer (i.e. they are also a levy-paying employer (this includes any connected companies)) – subject to this not being a condition of the transfer (see paragraph 240). This includes where providers are acting as a main provider or a subcontractor.

Evidence requirements

- Where the apprenticeship is being funded by a transfer of levy funds, providers must hold confirmation of who the sending employer is.

Subcontracting

New for 1 August 2026

- **Policy change:** 'On-programme assessment, previously used as a term to mean the formative assessment linked to a mandatory qualification. has been removed from the funding rules. Given the upcoming EPA reforms, we have removed the term to avoid confusion with the summative assessment that will, in future, be carried out (by providers) during the programme. Subcontracting is now only related to the delivery of training.

- **Update:** The reference to "Using Subcontractors in the Delivery of Apprenticeships' has been removed. This document is no longer current.

263 **Clarification:** To be clear that irrespective of how a subcontractor is selected (including whether they are on APAR), the provider is responsible for adhering to the subcontracting rules**.**

267 **Update:** The Public Contract Regulations (PCR) 2015 was replaced by the Procurement Act (PA) 2023 on 24 February 2025. PCR 2015 will continue to govern existing procurements; PA 2023 applies to new procurements.

283 **Update:** Following the Machinery of Government Changes on 1 April 2026, a reference to DWP has been added.

283.1 **Update:** In relation to the subcontracting standard there is an update of what information must be submitted and by when.

New for 1 August 2026 – Version 1

262.3. **Update:** An amendment to the existing de-minimis to remove the stipulation that this can only be used by providers who have achieved the subcontracting standard. This exemption can now be used by all providers, for delivery from 1 August 2026.

Glossary Clarification: We are reviewing the definition of a subcontractor to make it clearer who is and who is not a subcontractor and what we mean by directly managed and controlled. The intended definitions for both are included. New definitions will be implemented following the subcontracting review that will shortly take place (see Summary of Changes from further information); any changes following the review will likely apply from 1 January 2027.

Requirement for the provider to directly deliver some training

253. The provider must directly deliver some of the apprenticeship training associated with each employer's apprenticeship programme. By employer's apprenticeship programme, we mean all of the apprentices that a provider has been contracted to deliver training to, at that employer, irrespective of the occupational area, standard or level.

253.1. The volume of training that the provider directly delivers for each employer must have some substance and must not be a token amount to satisfy this rule.

253.2. It must not be limited to a brief input at the start of each employer's programme or involve delivery to just a few of a large number of apprentices. It does not include delivering only English or maths, or aspects of the apprenticeship which all apprentices must have, such as safeguarding or British values.

254. The provider can use subcontractors to complement their own delivery, if requested by an employer and agreed at the start of the apprenticeship. Within an employer's apprenticeship programme (conditional on paragraph 253) subcontractors can deliver full or part-apprenticeship training (please see the exception at paragraph 262.3.1).

Requirement to provide a rationale for subcontracting

255. The provider must have a sound rationale for subcontracting, which must enhance the quality of the learner offer. The decision to subcontract must not be motivated by financial gain. The educational rationale for subcontracting must be clear and must meet one or more of the following aims:

255.1. To enhance the opportunities available for learners;

255.2. To fill gaps in niche or expert provision, or to provide better access to training facilities;

255.3. To support better geographical access for learners;

255.4. To offer an entry point for disadvantaged groups; or

255.5. To give consideration of the impact on individuals with shared protected characteristics.

256. The provider must also have, before agreeing the use of subcontractors with an employer, a list of the services they will provide when subcontracting and how they will determine the associated costs. This information must include:

256.1. The full range of fees retained by the provider and charges (which must be eligible costs) that apply, including funding retained for managing quality assurance / oversight and for administrative functions such as data returns.

256.1.1 The department reserves the right to require an explanation where the funding retained as a management fee exceeds 20% of the overall contract value but offers little value.

256.2. How the provider will determine that each cost claimed by a subcontractor is reasonable and proportionate to the delivery of their teaching or learning and contributes to delivering high quality learning.

257. The provider must review their subcontracting policy (see paragraphs 255 to 256), including their rationale for subcontracting, ahead of each funding year and this must be signed off by the person charged with overall responsibility for the organisation in the governance structure. Once reviewed, the updated policy must be published by 31 October each year.

258. Main providers must publish the information referred to in paragraphs 255 and 256 on their website (the rationale for subcontracting, the services they will provide and the associated costs). Employer-providers must hold this information but are not required to publish it on their website.

Agreeing the use of subcontractors

259. Where the provider is a main provider, they must agree the use of subcontractors with the employer.

260. The provider must not use subcontractors if they do not have the knowledge, skills and experience of contracting with and managing subcontractors.

261. The provider must not use a subcontractor that they assess as being unsuitable, or whose quality of delivery is demonstrably inadequate, even where an employer decides not to work with them (the main provider) as a result.

Selecting a subcontractor

262. The provider must only use subcontractors that satisfy one of the following 5 criteria:

262.1. They are on the published Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR) and have applied by the main provider or supporting provider application route;

262.2. They are the apprentice's employer, or a connected company or charity as defined by HMRC, and are on the published APAR, having applied through the employer-provider application route;

262.3. They are not on the published APAR but will deliver less than £100,000 of apprenticeship training under contract across all main providers and employer-providers, between 1 August and 31 July each year.

262.3.1 The subcontractor must have a current UKPRN, must not have engaged the 'Funding higher risk organisations and subcontractors' policy and cannot deliver full apprenticeship standards. They can work with any main provider or employer-provider, even those that have not achieved the subcontracting standard.

262.4. They have been approved to be exempt from the requirement to be on this register and can produce written approval from the department confirming that this exception applies to them, including its duration.

263. Irrespective of how a subcontractor is selected, the provider is responsible for adhering to the subcontracting rules, including the declaration of all subcontractors (even if the subcontractor is not on APAR) (see paragraphs 281 to 283).

264. The provider must not enter into any agreement for brokerage. By brokerage we mean the provision by a third party of services, for a fee, to source subcontractors to deliver on their behalf.

265. The provider must carry out their own due diligence checks on potential subcontractors, including taking account of any relevant Ofsted reports. This process and its results must be available for inspection by us and employers. A potential subcontractor's presence on the APAR, or any other public register or database, must not be used as an indicator that they are suitable to deliver to the provider's, or the employer's, specific requirements.

266. The provider must have robust procedures in place to ensure they do not inadvertently fund extremist organisations through subcontracting of apprenticeship training.

267. The provider must ensure that they comply with current and relevant procurement regulations. If they are a contracting authority, this means that they must comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Procurement Act 2023 as appropriate. They must ensure that they select their subcontractor(s) fairly, transparently and without discrimination and they must

ensure that potential subcontractors have sufficient capacity, quality and business standing to deliver the provision that is being subcontracted to them.

268. The provider must not make artificial distinctions or put in place convoluted delivery arrangements in order to avoid the application of these rules. For example, describing the arrangement as a partnership or collaborative arrangement.

269. The provider must not agree the use of any subcontractor where this would require them to subcontract apprenticeship training to a second level. All subcontractors must be contracted directly by the provider, who may have more than one subcontractor.

270. The provider must maintain the relationship with each employer at all times. They must not allow a subcontractor to lead that relationship. They must also make sure that learners supported through subcontracting arrangements know about the provider's and the subcontractors' respective roles and responsibilities in delivering the apprenticeship.

The written agreement between the main provider and each employer

(Note: Paragraphs 271 to 272 do not apply to employer-providers)

271. The main provider must clearly describe to each employer and potential subcontractor before each subcontracting relationship is agreed, the reason for subcontracting and all services they will provide and the associated costs when doing so.

    271.1. This must include a list of specific costs for managing the subcontractor, for quality monitoring activities and any other support activity offered by the main provider to the subcontractor. All of these costs must be individually itemised and describe how each cost contributes to delivering high quality training. They must also explain how such costs are reasonable and proportionate to the delivery of the subcontracted apprenticeship training.

272. If the main provider and an employer subsequently agree to use a subcontractor, the main provider must put in place a written agreement with the employer that sets out and confirms the following for the delivery of their apprenticeship programme:

    272.1. The apprenticeship training that the main provider will directly deliver and the amount of funding they will retain for this direct delivery;

272.2. The apprenticeship training that each subcontractor will provide and the amount of funding the main provider will pay each subcontractor for this contribution;

272.3. The specific amount of funding the main provider will retain to manage and monitor each subcontractor;

272.4. The specific amount of funding the main provider will retain to monitor the quality of the training each subcontractor provides, and for each support / administrative function provided, including data returns;

272.5. A detailed description of how the funding retained for the activities detailed in paragraph 272.4 contributes to delivering high quality training and how the funding retained is reasonable and proportionate to delivery of the apprenticeship training by the subcontractor that is described in paragraph 272.2; and

272.6. Any actual or perceived conflict of interest between the main provider and any subcontractors. For example, where the main provider and a subcontractor are part of the same group, share common directors or senior personnel, or where the main provider will benefit financially from using a particular subcontractor.

The written agreement (the subcontract) between the provider and the subcontractor

273. The provider must put in place a legally binding written subcontracting agreement with the subcontractor before the subcontractor starts delivery of any subcontracted provision. We do not provide a template for subcontracts. As a minimum the subcontract must cover the following points:

273.1. An entitlement by the provider to exercise management controls over the subcontractor’s activity, including access by auditors appointed by either the provider or by us.

273.2. A list of all services the provider’s organisation will provide to the subcontractor and the associated costs for doing so. This must include:

273.2.1 A list of individually itemised, specific costs that the provider will charge for managing the subcontractor and how these are reasonable and proportionate to the delivery of their subcontracted provision.

273.2.2 Specific costs for quality monitoring activities and specific costs for any other support activities offered by the provider to the subcontractor and how these contribute to the delivery of high-quality learning.

273.2.3 Reference to the provider's subcontracting policy, including the rationale for subcontracting and where it can be found on their website.

273.3. A requirement to give us and any other person nominated in writing by them, access to the subcontractor's premises and to all documents related to their subcontracted delivery.

273.4. A requirement for the subcontractor to give the provider ILR data so that their organisation's data returns to the department accurately reflect the subcontractor's delivery information.

273.5. A requirement for the subcontractor to give the provider sufficient evidence to allow the provider to assess their performance against Ofsted's education inspection framework and to incorporate relevant evidence into the provider's self–assessment report and guide the judgements and grades within this self-assessment report.

273.6. A requirement for the subcontractor to always have suitably qualified staff available to provide the education and training funded by us.

273.7. A requirement for the subcontractor to co-operate with the provider if the subcontract ends for any reason to make sure that there is continuity of learning.

273.8. A requirement for the subcontractor to inform the provider if evidence of irregular financial or delivery issues arise. This could include but is not limited to non-delivery of training when funds have been paid, sanctions imposed by an awarding organisation, allegations of fraud, an urgent improvement Ofsted grade for any provider or provision level evaluation area, and allegations or complaints by apprentices, staff members or other relevant parties.

274. The provider must make sure their subcontractors comply with the requirements set out in these funding rules and they must ensure that they include, in the subcontracting agreement, provisions that enable them to terminate the subcontract should their subcontractor be removed from APAR or cease to have a valid UKPRN.

275. The provider should take their own legal advice about how best to incorporate these provisions and wider terms and conditions in their subcontracting agreements.

Delivery of apprenticeship training by subcontractors

276. The provider has overall responsibility for the quality of apprenticeship training undertaken by their subcontractors. They are responsible for the actions of their subcontractors connected to, or arising out of, the delivery of the services which are subcontracted to them. If a subcontractor fails to deliver, the provider will be responsible for making alternative arrangements for the delivery of education and training, protecting the audit trail and / or repaying us.

277. The provider must manage and monitor all of their subcontractors to ensure that high-quality delivery is taking place that meets the requirements of the agreement they have entered into with us for the provision of apprenticeship funded delivery (which must comply with the apprenticeship funding rules). The provider must ensure safeguarding is rigorously enforced.

277.1. It is not acceptable for any provider staff with a direct or indirect financial interest in the subcontractor to undertake any management control activities. This includes signing time sheets or invoices, as well as organising and / or carrying out monitoring activity on the subcontractor.

277.2. The provider must carry out a regular and substantial programme of quality-assurance checks on the apprenticeship training provided by their subcontractors, including visits at short notice and face-to-face interviews with staff and apprentices. The programme of checks must include whether the apprentices exist and are eligible, and must involve direct observation of initial guidance, assessment and delivery of training.

277.3. The provider's findings must be consistent with these funding rules, their expectations and the subcontractor's records. The provider must report any instances to us where this is not the case.

278. The prevent duty applies to subcontracted provision. It requires all providers to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. All providers must comply with relevant legislation and any statutory responsibilities associated with the delivery of education and safeguarding of students and this includes students receiving provision under a subcontracting arrangement.

279. If any of the provider's subcontractors undergoes a change of circumstances that affects their ability to continue to deliver under a subcontract, the provider must make alternative delivery arrangements for each apprentice affected by this, in agreement with the relevant employer. Change of circumstances include going into liquidation or administration, key delivery staff leaving the organisation, or removal from the APAR. The change of delivery arrangements must be recorded in the provider's written agreement with the employer.

Subcontracting threshold and exemption cases

(Note: this section does not apply to Local Authorities)

280. If the provider plans to pay subcontractors more than 25% of the apprenticeship funding they receive from us (determined using the financial information in the subcontractor declarations) and they do not think this can be reduced to less than this, they must submit an exemption case to us, to obtain the Department's agreement in advance of this provision commencing. Providers must also get approval if they intend to continue with any previously agreed existing subcontracting arrangements where they will exceed the 25% threshold in the next funding year. If there is a point in the funding year that planned provision changes and providers will exceed the 25% threshold within that year they must apply for an in-year exemption, using the form available.

280.1. The provider must submit the exemption case, using the form in the Request Approval to Subcontract section, to the department by 30 April of each funding year before the provision is due to start. The exemption case should be sent to customer.help@service.education.gov.uk. We will only consider late requests where there is evidence of exceptional circumstances.

280.2. We will consider the request, taking into account the detail that has been provided, as well as data and information available both internally and externally. We will consider:

280.2.1 The provider's subcontracting policy, including their fees and charges policy and whether this has been signed off by officers who are charged with governance in line with paragraph 257.

280.2.2 If the provider subcontracts more than £100,000 in a funding year, we will consider an external auditor's report on the effectiveness of the processes and controls they have in place for managing subcontractors as set out in paragraph 283.

280.2.3 Whether the subcontracting is delivering to learners who may not otherwise have access to provision, including there being no alternative provision, or the characteristics of the learner meaning another provider may not be suitable.

Subcontracting reporting and external audit requirements

281. The provider must record subcontracted provision in line with the published guidance for the individualised learner record (ILR) data returns.

282. If a provider returns ILR data, in accordance with their funding agreement(s) they must submit a fully completed subcontractor declaration twice during each funding year. The first declaration must be made by 31 October and the second declaration must be made by 30 June.

282.1. All subcontractors must be included on the returns, including those that are not required to be on APAR (due to the exception process or the de minimis).

282.2. If a provider does not subcontract, they must provide a nil return to confirm this

282.3. The provider must also update their subcontractor declaration if their subcontracting arrangements change during the year. This is done via their MyESF account.

283. In accordance with the provider's contract with us, they must meet the subcontracting standard as detailed in the subcontracting standard guidance if the aggregate total of all subcontractors delivering DfE funded provision, and DWP apprenticeship provision, on their behalf exceeds or is anticipated to exceed £100,000 in any single funding year. Whilst other programmes are excluded from these rules, for the purposes of calculating the aggregate total of subcontracted delivery the provider must include delivery of all DfE funded programmes, not just apprenticeships. Where the standard applies:

283.1. The provider must supply us with a report signed by an external auditor that provides assurance on the arrangements to manage and control their subcontractors. They must send a copy of their self assessment template and the external auditor's final report including the action plan of agreed recommendations and assurance declaration via the document exchange by 31 August of the relevant year (see subcontracting standard guidance for further information). The department will review this as part of our overall assurance arrangements.

283.1.1 If we do not receive the auditor's report on the subcontracting standard by this date the provider will be deemed as non-compliant and funding may be affected / delayed.

Disputes and issue resolution between the provider and employer

284. The provider is responsible for resolving issues and disputes between the employer and their subcontractors. They must provide employers and apprentices with their written complaints and dispute resolution procedure, policy and process. The first contact point for this must be included in the written agreement and in the training plan.

285. Agreements entered into between the provider and the employer must be legally binding. Dispute resolution should be in accordance with the terms of the written agreement, which ultimately would be enforceable through the courts.

286. The provider must make apprentices and their employers aware that they can contact the apprenticeship helpline regarding apprenticeship concerns, complaints and enquiries. The contact number and website must also be included in the employer's written agreement and in the apprentice's training plan.

Special conditions for a main provider subcontracting to an employer-provider

287. Organisations who have successfully applied through the employer-provider route of the APAR are only eligible to deliver apprenticeship training to apprentices employed either by them or a connected company or charity as defined by HMRC. The main provider must ensure any employer-providers who are subcontractors meet this requirement.

288. The main provider must ensure that the subcontractor (the employer-provider) evidences the actual costs of delivery of apprenticeship training. Employer-providers must not profit from apprenticeship delivery to their own employees or those of a connected company.

Special conditions for a provider to subcontract to a supporting provider

289. Subcontractors who have successfully applied to the supporting application route of the APAR must not receive more than £500,000, or £100,000 if the subcontractor is identified as new (see glossary definition), of apprenticeship funding for their delivery from 1 August to 31 July each year. The provider must ensure that they are not one of a number of organisations making payments to any supporting provider that exceed £500,000, or £100,000 if the subcontractor is identified as new, in any one year. We will place restrictions on the future use of subcontractors if this happens.

289.1. We will exclude any supporting provider that has applied to the APAR through the supporting provider application route where they allow their funding to exceed their respective total in any one year.

Special conditions for all instances where the employer is the subcontractor

290. Where the employer is the subcontractor the provider must only pay them for actual costs of delivery. Employers must not profit from apprenticeship delivery to their own employees or those of a connected company.

Evidence requirements

The provider has:

- Evidence that they are directly delivering some of the apprenticeship training associated with each employer’s apprenticeship programme (see paragraph 253) and are maintaining the relationship with each employer at all times (see paragraph 270).

- Evidenced that they are directly delivering some of the apprenticeship training associated with each employer’s apprenticeship programme (see paragraph 253) and are maintaining the relationship with each employer at all times (see paragraph 270).

- Made available their subcontracting policy (see paragraphs 255 to 257). Where the provider is a main provider they have also published this information.

- Agreed any subcontracting requirement with the employer. They have then followed the rules on selecting a suitable subcontractor (see paragraphs 262 to 269), put in place a written agreement with each employer (see paragraphs 271 to 272) and have issued the relevant disputes and issue resolution information to employers and apprentices (see paragraphs 284 to 286).

- Put in place a written agreement with each subcontractor (see paragraphs 273 to 274) and put in place arrangements to monitor the apprenticeship training delivered by subcontractors (see paragraphs 276 to 279).

- Confirmed, where they are using the de-minimis exception at paragraph 262.3, that the subcontractor complies with the relevant conditions.

- Confirmed, where they are using the de-minimis exception at paragraph 262.4, that they are an accredited initial teacher training (ITT) provider that has been approved by DfE.

- Where needed, applied for an exemption to the subcontracting threshold by the published deadline (see paragraph 280).

- Met the relevant subcontracting reporting and external audit requirements (see paragraphs 281 to 283).

Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agencies (FJAAs)

291. In order to operate as a FJAA, an organisation must be on the Register of Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agencies, comply with the FJAA Conditions of Registration and meet the requirements of the Quality Framework for Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agencies. More information can be found on GOV.UK.

292. The main provider must report in their ILR that the apprentice is employed by a FJAA.

293. FJAAs must ensure that the learner record in their apprenticeship service account shows that the apprentice is following the FJAA model (i.e. they are going on placements with host employers). They must also inform the apprentice that they are on this delivery model.

294. Where there is a gap between placements with host employers, FJAAs must continue to employ and pay the apprentice. Where possible, main providers should continue to deliver active learning to the apprentice (see paragraphs 92 to 95). If this is not possible the apprentice must be put on a break in learning (see paragraphs 307 to 311).

295. FJAAs who are on the Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR) as a registered provider, must act as an employer-provider when delivering training to their FJAA apprentices – meaning they can only claim actual training costs (see paragraph 124).

Evidence requirements

Main providers must hold documented details of the apprentice’s placement(s) – this includes the name of the host employer(s) and the duration of the placement(s).

Prisoner apprenticeships

296. Prisoners serving a custodial sentence in England are eligible to undertake an apprenticeship under the alternative English apprenticeship rules (see paragraphs 73 to 74).

    296.1. Prisoner apprentices may undertake end-point assessment prior to release. This applies to:

        296.1.1 Prisoner apprentices who are enrolled on an apprenticeship whilst on Release on Temporary License (RoTL); and

296.1.2 Prisoner apprentices enrolled on an apprenticeship in the closed estate whose release date is within 2 years.

296.2. Military prisoners, immigration detainees and prisoners on remand are ineligible for apprenticeships offered in prisons.

297. Prisoner apprentices who are enrolled on an apprenticeship whilst on RoTL must be paid the appropriate minimum wage. Prisoner apprentices who are enrolled on an apprenticeship in the closed estate will be subject to prison rules and payments for work will reflect the existing rates of pay for work within a prison setting as set by HMPPS.

Evidence requirements

Confirmation from the employer that a completed and signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is in place.

Change of circumstance

New for 1 August 2026

306.1 Clarification: We have clarified that where the apprentice has not commenced new employment within 4 weeks of the apprenticeship agreement and / or their employment ending, the provider must, after 30 days, record the apprentice as on a break in learning to ensure funds are not paid when the apprentice is employed.

306.2 Clarification: We have clarified that where the apprentice does not re-start with a new employer within 8 weeks of the start of their break in learning (a total of 12 weeks following the end of their employment), the main provider must withdraw the apprentice.

New for 1 August 2026 – Version 1

306.1 Correction / Clarification: We have clarified that where the apprentice has not commenced new employment within 4 weeks of the apprenticeship agreement and / or their employment ending, the provider must, after 4 weeks of the apprenticeship agreement / employment ending, record the apprentice as on a break in learning to ensure funds are not paid when the apprentice is not employed.

New for 1 August 2026 – Version 2

301.2 Policy Update: We have removed the reference regarding the mandatory requirement for employer co-investment to be collected and recorded.

Overview

298. If any circumstances change that affect any agreements, providers and employers must revise existing agreements or create new agreements. This includes but is not limited to:

   298.1. Changes to the apprentice’s programme (including changing to a new version of a standard see paragraphs 327 to 343)

   298.2. Changes to price;

   298.3. Changes to the apprentice’s eligibility;

   298.4. Any updates required to the employer’s apprenticeship service account;

298.5. Changes to the apprentice's contract or working pattern;

298.6. Changes to the apprenticeship duration;

298.7. Changes to the apprentice's employer

298.8. Changes to the provider or subcontractor;

298.9. Breaks in learning.

299. If any change of circumstances is not included above, providers must seek advice from us about what action they must take. Please contact apprenticeship service support.

Where training or assessment stops

300. Where a change of circumstance means that training and / or assessment is no longer being delivered, no further funds from an employer's apprenticeship service account, government-employer co-investment or additional payments will be made.

301. In these circumstances:

301.1. Providers must inform us of the date at which training or assessment activity stopped through the ILR.

301.2. Main providers must agree with the employer the cost of the training and, where applicable, the end-point assessment delivered to date.

302. If an apprentice leaves without completing their apprenticeship, the last date of learning, including the apprenticeship programme learning aim, is the date that providers have evidence the apprentice was still in learning for any learning that was part of their apprenticeship.

303. Where a 16–17-year-old apprentice is at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training), providers must:

303.1. Offer IAG support to any apprentice who is at risk of withdrawing from their apprenticeship earlier or who is at risk of not remaining in employment following completion of their programme.

303.1.1 This also includes both education and local employment opportunities.

303.2. Comply with their statutory duty to notify the relevant local authority of any 16-17-year-old who is no longer participating in training and is at risk of becoming NEET (this will enable them to access the local authority support systems).

304. When a change of circumstance results in over-payment of funds from an employer’s apprenticeship service account or government-employer co-investment, providers must repay any over-payments.

305. Main providers must follow the arrangements set out in their agreement with the employer for any over-payment by the employer and agree any reimbursement for employer co-investment made for learning paid for, but not undertaken; or learning delivered, but not yet paid up to the employee’s leave date, or the date of their break in learning, as needed.

306. When employment or an apprenticeship agreement has ended (resignation, dismissal or any other action by the apprentice or the employer that results in the apprenticeship agreement ending, with the exception of redundancy) and new employment has commenced within 4 weeks of the agreement ending, we do not expect a withdrawal to be recorded.

306.1. Where the apprentice has not commenced new employment within 4 weeks of the apprenticeship agreement and / or their employment ending, the provider must, after 4 weeks of the employment ending, record the apprentice as on a break in learning to ensure funds are not paid when the apprentice is not employed.

306.2. Where the apprentice does not re-start with a new employer within 8 weeks of the start of their break in learning (a total of 12 weeks following the end of their employment/end of the apprenticeship agreement), the main provider must withdraw the apprentice.

Breaks in learning

New for 1 August 2026 – Version 1

- **Update:** Following feedback, queries received and further legal advice, we have removed the reference to apprentices who are absent from work for medical reasons being able to continue with their apprenticeship.

Provider-led breaks in learning

307. For front-loaded and block release models (see glossary definitions), that have been agreed with the employer and documented in the training plan, the provider must use a break in learning where there is no plan for any off-the-job training active learning (OTJT active learning) to take place within a 3 calendar

month period (see paragraphs 93.1 to 93.2). This includes circumstances where active learning for English and / or maths is taking place.

307.1. For all other delivery models the provider must use a break in learning where there is no plan for OTJT active learning to take place within a calendar month (see paragraphs 94.1 to 94.2). This includes circumstances where active learning for English and / or maths is taking place.

308. The provider must not record a break in learning:

308.1. For annual leave, public holidays and short-term absence (where the apprentice is able to continue OTJT active learning).

308.2. For those apprentices with a term-time only contract, where we do not require a break in learning for the month of August.

308.3. When employment or an apprenticeship agreement has ended. Where an apprentice has been made redundant please refer to the redundancy section in the rules (see paragraphs 312 to 316). In circumstances where an apprentice changes employer and there is a break in employment of more than 30 days and up to 12 weeks, please see paragraph 306.

Apprentice-led breaks in learning

309. An apprentice may request to take a break in learning from their apprenticeship if they plan to return to the same programme at a later date.

309.1. An apprentice may take a break in learning either with, or without a break in employment.

309.2. The reason for the break and its expected duration must be discussed with their employer. This could include medical treatment, parental leave or leave for other personal reasons.

Principles

310. Where the apprentice takes a break in learning and then returns to the same apprenticeship, they will return to the same funding rules they were following prior to their break.

310.1. The provider must use the last date of evidenced learning activity for the programme (prior to the break in learning) as the learning actual end date.

310.2. When the apprentice returns from the break in learning, the employer must revise the apprenticeship agreement and the provider must revise the training plan, to account for the duration of the break. It must be clear that there have been multiple episodes of learning. The overall duration of the apprenticeship and the required volume of off-the-job training can remain the same (as though there had been no break in learning).

311. Providers must record breaks in learning on the ILR in a timely manner and re-plan the delivery of any remaining training and / or assessment following a break, if required. Employers may temporarily pause payments through their apprenticeship service account until the provider's ILR has been updated.

311.1. We will stop making payments from funds in an employer's apprenticeship service account or government-employer co-investment if an apprentice has a break in learning.

311.2. If an apprentice is on a break in learning when an additional payment or an apprenticeship hiring payment for non-levy employers is due, the payment will be delayed until the apprentice resumes their apprenticeship and has reached an overall total of 90 or 365 days in learning.

311.2.1 Where an apprentice is on a shorter apprenticeship (where the published typical duration of the apprenticeship standard is less than 12 months), or on a foundation apprenticeship, the payment will be delayed until the apprentice resumes their apprenticeship and has reached an overall total of 90 or 242 days in learning.

311.3. If an apprentice is on a break in learning when a care leavers' bursary payment is due, the payment will be delayed until the apprentice resumes their apprenticeship and has reached an overall total of 60, 120 or 300 days in learning.

311.3.1 Where an apprentice is on a shorter apprenticeship (where the published typical duration of the apprenticeship standard is less than 12 months), or on a foundation apprenticeship, the payment will be delayed until the apprentice resumes their apprenticeship and has reached an overall total of 60, 120 or 242 days in learning.

Redundancy

New for 1 August 2026

313.1 / 313.2 Policy update: If the apprentice is being fully funded to completion, they are able to become self-employed. We would treat this the same way as a job with a new employer not related to the apprenticeship (e.g. the new employer (the apprentice) would not assume responsibility). Note that self-employment is not an option with the time-limited (up to) 12 weeks funding support.

Apprentices who have their apprenticeship agreement terminated by reason of redundancy who, on the day of dismissal, are within six months of the final day of the apprenticeship practical period OR they have completed at least 75% of the apprenticeship practical period specified in the apprenticeship agreement:

312. Apprentices who meet the above definition may continue their apprenticeship training without being employed under an apprenticeship agreement (see paragraph 73). In these circumstances the provider can continue to deliver the apprenticeship training so long as all the remaining elements, including the end-point assessment, can still be successfully delivered.

    312.1. We will fund 100% of the remaining costs of the total price, up to the funding band maximum.

    312.2. In the case of an employer-provider, the apprentice must wish to continue to train with an organisation that they no longer work for.

313. The provider must:

    313.1. Record the change in employment status in the ILR and ensure payments from the relevant apprenticeship service account stop, including where the apprenticeship is funded by a transfer. These dates must match the date the apprentice's apprenticeship agreement was terminated.

    313.2. Support the apprentice through to the end of the apprenticeship, including any assessment.

    313.3. Make reasonable efforts to find the apprentice a new employer.

        313.3.1 Where the provider is a main provider: If the apprentice finds a new employer where they can complete their apprenticeship, the new employer assumes all outstanding liabilities and benefits from that point. The main provider must negotiate a new price, if required, with the new employer and input this on the ILR. If the apprentice takes a job with an employer which is not related to their apprenticeship, or becomes self-employed, we will continue to fund them as per paragraph 312.1.

313.3.2 Where the provider is an employer-provider: If the apprentice finds a new employer, or becomes self-employed, the current employer-provider can no longer continue to deliver training. It would be the responsibility of the new employer, or the apprentice, to secure a new provider in order for the apprenticeship to continue.

Apprentices who have their apprenticeship agreement terminated by reason of redundancy who, on the day of dismissal, have completed less than 75% of the apprenticeship practical period specified in the apprenticeship agreement and the remaining training represents a training duration of six months or more:

314. Apprentices who meet the above definition may continue their apprenticeship training without being employed under an apprenticeship agreement (see paragraph 73). In these circumstances the provider can continue to deliver the apprenticeship training, where it can be successfully delivered.

314.1. We will fund the remaining costs of the price previously negotiated for up to 12 weeks, while the apprentice seeks a new employer.

314.2. In the case of an employer-provider, the apprentice must wish to continue training with an organisation that they no longer work for.

315. The provider must:

315.1. Record the change in employment status in the ILR and ensure payments from the relevant apprenticeship service account stop, including where the apprenticeship is funded by a transfer. These dates must match the date the apprentice’s apprenticeship agreement was terminated.

315.2. Make reasonable efforts to find the apprentice a new employer.

315.2.1 Where the provider is a main provider: If the apprentice finds a new employer where they can complete their apprenticeship, then the new employer assumes all outstanding liabilities and benefits from that point. The main provider must negotiate a new price, if required, with the new employer and input this on the ILR. If the apprentice takes a job with an employer which is not related to their apprenticeship, we will continue to fund them as per paragraph 314.1.

315.2.2 Where the provider is an employer-provider: If the apprentice finds a new employer, the current employer-provider can no longer continue to deliver the training. It would be the responsibility of the new employer to secure a new provider for the apprentice, should both parties wish to continue with the apprenticeship.

316. Where a new employer is not found within 12 weeks, the provider must record the apprentice as withdrawn (by reason of redundancy) and they must issue the apprentice with a ‘record of apprenticeship part-completion’ to support them to find new employment.

316.1. This record must include, as a minimum, a) details of the apprentice; b) details of the apprenticeship (level, subject, start date and planned end date); c) the percentage of the apprenticeship completed; d) a summary of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that the apprentice has developed and evidenced during their time on the apprenticeship; and e) in the case of apprenticeships with mandatory qualifications, the qualification, or units thereof, achieved.

Evidence requirements

The provider:

- Has evidence of the apprentice’s redundancy. This may be a copy of the apprentice’s dismissal notice (which cites the reason for dismissal as redundancy). In the absence of this, other evidence which would allow one to reasonably conclude that the apprentice has been made redundant is acceptable (e.g. an email informing employees that the business is closing / has closed). See the Glossary definition for the situations which amount to redundancy in law.

- Is able to show what reasonable efforts have been made to find the apprentice a new employer.

- Has, where an apprentice is withdrawn because they have been unable to find a new employer, recorded the withdrawal reason as redundancy and has issued the apprentice with a ‘record of apprenticeship part-completion’ that meets the criteria in paragraph 316.

Maternity, adoption and shared parental leave

Maternity leave

317. An apprentice may carry out up to 10 days' work for their employer during the maternity leave period without bringing their maternity leave period to an end (these days are referred to as keeping in touch (KIT) days). If an apprentice wishes to use any of their 10 designated KIT days to continue with apprenticeship training, assessment or end-point assessment, they may do so and the provider can continue to support them.

    317.1. Apprentices will lose their entitlement to statutory maternity pay and may bring their statutory maternity leave to an end if they undertake more than 10 days' work (their KIT entitlement) during their maternity leave. This may not affect any contractual rights.

    317.2. Where KIT days are to be used for off-the job training during a period of maternity leave, the provider is required to agree this in writing with the apprentice and the employer (see paragraph 321).

Adoption leave

318. An apprentice may carry out up to 10 days' work for their employer during their statutory adoption leave period without bringing their statutory adoption leave or adoption pay period to an end (these days are referred to as keeping in touch (KIT) days). If an apprentice wishes to use any of their 10 designated KIT days to continue with apprenticeship training, assessment or end-point assessment, they may do so and the provider can continue to support them.

    318.1. Where KIT days are to be used for off-the job training during a period of adoption leave, the provider is required to agree this in writing with the apprentice and the employer (see paragraph 321).

Shared parental leave

319. An apprentice may work for up to 20 days during a shared parental leave period for each of their employers without bringing their leave to an end. These days are referred to as shared parental leave in touch (SPLIT) days; these are separate and additional to any KIT days during a period of maternity or adoption leave. If an apprentice wishes to use any of their designated SPLIT days to continue with apprenticeship training, assessment or end-point assessment, they may do so and the provider can continue to support them.

319.1. Where SPLIT days are to be used for off-the job training during a period of shared parental leave, the provider is required to agree this in writing with the apprentice and the employer (see paragraph 321).

Paternal leave

320. Statutory paternal leave is a maximum period of 2 weeks. The provider would be expected to structure the delivery of training around any paternal leave so that the apprentice can still complete their programme.

The agreement

321. Where an apprentice and employer wish to use KIT / SPLIT days to continue with apprenticeship off-the-job training and / or assessment, the provider must complete the following agreement with them. This agreement must be signed by all parties (provider, employer, apprentice) and must include:

321.1. The apprentice's reason behind their request to continue apprenticeship training during KIT / SPLIT days;

321.2. The number of KIT / SPLIT days to be used and the number of hours proposed to be spent on training on these days (any training carried out on any KIT / SPLIT day would constitute 1 full day's work and therefore one KIT / SPLIT day);

321.3. An acknowledgement by the apprentice that in undertaking training and / or assessment, including end-point assessment, on KIT / SPLIT days this will impact their entitlement to KIT / SPLIT days, as well as statutory maternity / adoption / shared parental leave and pay (i.e. they may lose statutory maternity / adoption / shared parental leave and pay if KIT / SPLIT days are exceeded); and

321.4. An agreement by the employer and provider in relation to the timing of KIT / SPLIT days relative to the monthly payments that the provider will continue to receive if a break in learning is not utilised.

321.4.1 A break in learning must be used to pause funding if there is no plan for any active learning to take place on a KIT / SPLIT day within a calendar month block

322. During a period of maternity / adoption / shared parental leave, only the off-the-job training that is delivered on the actual KIT / SPLIT day(s) can be included towards the minimum off-the-job training requirement by the provider. At all other times during the leave period, the apprentice is not 'working' and therefore any training delivered during this time would not meet the definition of off-the-job training.

323. The intention of the policy arrangements described in paragraphs 317 to 321 is to allow an apprentice with minimal training days left (less than the available number of KIT / SPLIT days) to complete their apprenticeship during their leave or to use these days to allow for an incremental return to training prior to returning to the workplace (e.g. to train with a cohort prior to a return to the workplace).

324. The maternity, adoption and shared parental leave policy and the use of KIT / SPLIT days is not designed to support sporadic activity during a long period of leave, and the provider must, where possible, avoid multiple breaks in learning.

Actions for the provider and employer to take

325. If the apprentice is not intending to use any KIT / SPLIT days to continue off-the-job training during their period of maternity / adoption / shared parental leave, please follow the guidance for breaks in learning (see paragraphs 307 to 311). The break in learning would be used for the full period of maternity / adoption / shared parental leave.

326. If the apprentice is intending to use KIT / SPLIT days to continue off-the-job training during their period of maternity / adoption / shared parental leave, please see paragraphs 321 to 324.

Evidence requirements

- A copy of the agreement, signed by all parties, which complies with the detail set out in paragraph 321.

Changing to a new version of a standard

New for 1 August 2026

328 **Policy update:** For apprentices wishing to move to a new version of a standard where the assessment plan has been revised, please see Annex B of this document and the Changes to apprenticeship assessment 2025 to 2026 guidance.

339 **Clarification:** We have clarified that the minimum duration requirements will be those that applied to the standard on the apprentice's original start date.

327. The funding rules in this section apply irrespective of the apprentice's start date and include existing learners who started their apprenticeship in previous funding years. They apply where an existing apprentice wishes to move to a

newer version of the same standard including those assigned new version costs under Skills England's revisions, adjustments and dispensations process.

328. For apprentices wishing to move to a new version of a standard where the assessment plan has been revised, please see Annex B of this document and the Changes to apprenticeship assessment 2025 to 2026 guidance.

329. Apprentices already engaged on the earlier version of a standard may transfer to the latest version of the same standard (that is where the ST number remains the same) at any stage within their apprenticeship subject to meeting the rules on end-point assessment. Where an apprentice is already engaged on a standard which has been replaced with a new apprenticeship standard (that is with a new ST code), this would be treated as a change of programme.

330. Where an apprentice wishes to move to a new version of a standard, the provider must ensure that this is agreed by them, the apprentice and their employer.

330.1. The provider must make the apprentice and employer aware of the differences between the version of the apprenticeship the apprentice is registered on, in comparison to the one they are transferring to, in terms of the demands of the standards and the requirements of the end-point assessment plan.

330.2. The main provider and employer must update both the apprenticeship agreement and the training plan to reflect this agreement.

331. Where an apprentice changes version, the provider must make sure that the training and assessment they receive across the whole apprenticeship delivers occupational competence in all aspects of the new standard version and enables them to pass the end-point assessment.

332. Apprentices must not move back to a previous version of the same standard once they have moved to a new version.

333. Apprentices who are returning from a break in learning may return to the version of the standard they were on before their break in learning, even where it has been closed to new starts.

334. If the apprentice is already registered with an end-point assessment organisation, the provider must:

334.1. Confirm with them that they will be approved and ready to deliver the end-point assessment for the new version by the time the apprentice requires it, before enabling the apprentice to move versions; and

334.2. Inform them when the apprentice has transferred to a new version.

335. If the apprentice is not registered with an end-point assessment organisation, or the existing end-point assessment organisation is unable to confirm that they will be approved and ready to deliver the end-point assessment for the new version by the time the apprentice requires it, the provider must ensure that an alternative end-point assessment organisation will be available and ready to deliver the end-point assessment for the new version before enabling the apprentice to move versions (subject to the rules in paragraphs 142 and 143).

336. If no end-point assessment organisation will be approved and available to deliver the end-point assessment for the new version by the time the apprentice requires it, the apprentice must not transfer to the new version.

337. Where an apprentice is moving versions, there will be no change to how their standard is recorded on the ILR; the provider must continue to record them on the ILR on the standard that they started on.

338. Where the apprentice is funded through the apprenticeship service, the provider must ensure that the apprentice's details in the service are updated to assign them on to the new version.

339. The provider must make sure that the combined duration of the apprentice's time on the legacy version and the new version meets the apprenticeship minimum duration requirements that applied to the standard on the apprentice's original start date.

340. Where an existing apprentice moves versions, they will continue on the same funding band that they started on.

341. Employers may choose to re-negotiate the price with the main provider / end-point assessment organisation for the new version.

342. Employer-providers may wish to change the cost and / or re-negotiate the price with the end-point assessment organisation for the new version.

343. If the employer negotiates an overall price / the overall cost is more than the funding band maximum for the standard that the apprentice started on, then the employer must pay in full the difference between the band maximum for the original standard and the total cost. This cannot be funded from the apprenticeship service account.

Programme evidence requirements

344. Providers must give accurate unique learner number (ULN) information to the apprenticeship service, awarding organisations and end-point assessment

organisations and ensure all information used to register an apprentice is correct.

345. Providers must hold evidence to assure us that they are using apprenticeship funding appropriately. Most evidence will occur naturally from their normal business process. If evidence is not available funding may be at risk.

345.1. Providers must make this evidence pack available to us on request.

345.2. The apprentice and / or employer must confirm the information they provide is correct when it is collected. Providers must have evidence of this, which can include electronic formats.

345.3. Where information is held centrally, providers only need to refer to the source.

Confirmation and signatures

346. We accept electronic evidence, including electronic / digital signatures. Where evidence is electronic, providers must have wider systems and processes in place to assure that apprentices exist and are eligible for funds.

347. Where an electronic or digital signature is being held, from any party for any reason, providers must ensure it is irrefutable. Systems and processes must be in place to assure to us that the original signature has not been altered. Where any document needs to be renewed and a new signature taken, it must be clear from when the new document takes effect and both must be held.

347.1. Both electronic and digital signatures are acceptable, we do not specify which must be used, only that a secure process to obtain and store signatures is followed.

347.2. An electronic signature is defined as any electronic symbol or process that is associated with any record or document where there is an intention to sign the document by any party involved. An electronic signature can be anything from a check box to a signature.

347.3. A digital signature is where a document with an electronic signature is secured by a process making it irrefutable. It is a digital fingerprint which captures the act of signing by applying security to a document. Usually documents which have a digital signature embedded are extremely secure and cannot be accessed or amended easily.

348. Providers must keep effective and reliable evidence and are responsible for making the evidence they hold easily available to us when we need it.

Individualised learner record (ILR)

349. The evidence pack must include all information reported to us in the ILR and the earnings adjustment statement (EAS) and if it applies, the supporting evidence for the data providers report.

350. Providers must accurately complete all ILR fields for an apprentice as required in the ILR specification, even if they are not used for funding. This includes reporting an accurate National Insurance number for the apprentice.

  350.1. Where provider data does not support the funding they have claimed, we will take action to get this corrected and could recover funds.

351. Employers must make sure that the PAYE scheme used in the apprenticeship service account for the apprentice is linked to the National Insurance number for the apprentice declared by the provider in the ILR.

352. The ILR must accurately reflect what has happened. Providers must not report inaccurate information even where they perceive that this would result in a more equitable claim for funding or accurate record of performance.

Self-declarations

353. Where a self-declaration is needed, this must state the apprentice or employer’s details and describe what is being confirmed.

Annex A: Residency eligibility criteria (who we fund)

New for 1 August 2026

374.6 Policy update: We have added an additional exemption to those outside England able to be funded for an apprenticeship.

354. To use funds in the employer's apprenticeship service account or government-employer co-investment, the individual must have a valid and eligible residency status and the right to work in England.

Definition of ordinarily resident

355. For funding purposes, the DWP / DfE regards as ordinarily resident in a given country any person who habitually, normally and lawfully resides from choice and for a settled purpose in that country. A person who is in the country unlawfully, which includes someone who has overstayed their visa, is not ordinarily resident.

Temporary absences from the UK

356. Learners who are temporarily outside of the UK for reasons such as education, employment or a gap year, should be considered ordinarily resident in the UK for the purposes of assessing eligibility for apprenticeship funding upon their return to the UK.

357. British armed forces, Ministry of Defence (MoD) personnel or civil crown servants on postings outside of the UK, can also be treated as ordinarily resident in the UK for the purposes of checking eligibility for apprenticeship funding upon their return to the UK.

UK nationals and other persons with right of abode

358. UK nationals or other persons with a right of abode have an eligible residency status if they have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands or the British Overseas Territories for at least the previous 3 years on the first day of the apprenticeship.

359. All family members of UK nationals must meet the required residency eligibility criteria in their own right, unless they meet the criteria in the section entitled "UK nationals in the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland", or the criteria in the section entitled "Family members of an eligible person of Northern Ireland".

360. The British Overseas Territories are listed in the “Countries or areas where residency establishes eligibility for our funding” section.

Non-UK nationals

361. Non-UK nationals are eligible for funding if:

361.1. They have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands for at least the previous 3-year period on the first day of their apprenticeship;

361.2. Whose ordinary residence in the UK and Islands has not during any part of that period been wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving full-time education; and

361.3. Have permission granted by the UK government to live in the UK and such permission is not for education purposes only.

UK nationals in the EEA and Switzerland

362. UK nationals and their family members will have an eligible residency status if they have:

362.1. Resided in the EEA, Switzerland, European Union (EU) overseas territories or Gibraltar by 31 December 2020 (or resident in the UK, having moved there from the EEA, Switzerland, EU overseas territories or Gibraltar after 31 December 2017); and

362.2. Resided in the EEA, Switzerland, EU overseas territories, Gibraltar or the UK for at least the previous 3 years before the start of the apprenticeship; and

362.3. Remained ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA, Switzerland or EU overseas territories between 31 December 2020 and the start of the apprenticeship; and

362.4. The apprenticeship starts before 1 January 2028.

363. Family members of UK nationals, where both the UK national and the family member have resided in the EEA, Switzerland or EU overseas territories, have an eligible residency status if:

363.1. Both the UK national and the family member resided in the EEA, Switzerland or EU Overseas Territories by 31 December 2020 (or resided in the UK, having moved there from the EEA, Switzerland or EU Overseas Territories after 31 December 2017); and

363.2. Both the UK national and the family member remained ordinarily resident in the UK, the EEA, Switzerland or EU Overseas Territories between 31 December 2020 and the start of the course; and

363.3. The UK national to whom they are a family member has been ordinarily resident in the UK, EEA, Switzerland or EU Overseas Territories for at least 3 years on the first day of the apprenticeship; and

363.4. The course starts before 1 January 2028.

363.5. A family member for these purposes is either:

363.5.1 The husband, wife, civil partner of the UK national (principal); or

363.5.2 The child, grandchild, spouse / civil partner's child or spouse / civil partner's grandchild of the UK national (principal) who is either under 21, or dependant on the principal and / or his / her spouse / civil partner.

EEA and Switzerland nationals in the UK

364. EEA and Switzerland nationals have an eligible residency status if they have obtained either pre-settled or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) and have lived continuously in the EEA, Switzerland, Gibraltar, or the UK for at least the previous 3 years on the first day of their apprenticeship. Where an individual has pre-settled status, it does not expire even where the individual has not made a further application to the EUSS. As such an individual with pre-settled status is deemed to have enough time remaining on their residency to complete an apprenticeship (for the purpose of determining eligibility under paragraph 30.2).

Family members of EEA or Swiss Nationals

365. A family member of an EEA or Swiss national is eligible for funding if:

365.1. Where required to do so, they have obtained pre-settled or settled status under EUSS; and

365.2. The EEA or Swiss national (principal) has obtained pre-settled or settled status under EUSS and has been ordinarily resident in the UK, EEA and / or Switzerland for at least the previous 3 years on the first day of their apprenticeship.

365.3. A family member for these purposes is either:

365.3.1 The husband, wife, civil partner of the EEA or Swiss national (principal); or

365.3.2 The child or grandchild of the EEA or Swiss national (principal), or of their spouse / civil partner, who is either under 21, or dependant on the principal and / or his / her spouse / civil partner; or

365.3.3 The dependant parent or grandparent of the principal or of the principal's spouse / civil partner.

Irish citizens in UK or Republic of Ireland

366. Irish citizens in the UK or Republic of Ireland have an eligible residency status if they have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands, and / or Republic of Ireland for at least the previous 3 years on the first day of the apprenticeship.

Irish citizens in EEA and Switzerland

367. Irish citizens have an eligible residency status if they:

367.1. Resided in the EEA or Switzerland by 31 December 2020 (or resident in the UK, having moved to the UK from EEA or Switzerland after 31 December 2017); and

367.2. Resided in the EEA, Switzerland, Gibraltar or the UK for at least the previous 3 years on the first day of the apprenticeship; and

367.3. Remained ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar, the EEA or Switzerland between 31 December 2020 and the start of the apprenticeship; and

367.4. Start their apprenticeship before 1 January 2028.

Family members of an eligible person of Northern Ireland

368. Family members of an eligible person of Northern Ireland have an eligible residency status if:

368.1. They have been living in the UK by 31 December 2020; and

368.2. They have obtained pre-settled or settled status under EUSS; and

368.3. The eligible person of Northern Ireland (principal) has been ordinarily resident in the UK by 31 December 2020, for at least the previous 3 years on the first day of the apprenticeship.

368.4. A family member for these purposes is either:

368.4.1 The husband, wife, civil partner of the person of Northern Ireland (principal) or

368.4.2 The child or grandchild of the principal, or of their spouse / civil partner, who is either under 21, or dependant on the principal and / or his / her spouse / civil partner; or

368.4.3 The dependant parent or grandparent of the principal or of the principal's spouse / civil partner.

Joining family members under the EU Settlement Scheme

369. Family members of an EEA or Swiss national can apply to EUSS after 30 June 2021, if they are joining them in the UK on or after 1 April 2021. They have 3 months to apply to EUSS from the date they arrive in the UK. They will be eligible for funding once they have obtained either pre-settled or settled status under the EUSS.

369.1. The joining family member must also be ordinarily resident in the UK, Gibraltar, EEA, and / or Switzerland for at least the previous 3 years on the first day of the apprenticeship.

Individuals with certain types of immigration status and their family members

370. Any individual with any of the statuses listed below, is eligible to receive funding and is exempt from the 3-year residency requirement rule but will need to be ordinarily resident in the UK since the grant of their status. Providers must have seen the individual's immigration permission (see the evidence requirements for learner eligibility) in these circumstances.

370.1. Individuals with refugee status, where they have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since they were recognised as a refugee.

370.2. Family members of individuals with refugee status, as defined below:

370.2.1 The spouse or civil partner of a person with refugee status is eligible if all of the following apply:

370.2.1.1 They were the spouse or civil partner of the person on the asylum application date; and

370.2.1.2 They have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since they were given leave to enter or remain in the UK.

370.2.2 The child of a person with refugee status to enter or remain, or of the person's spouse or civil partner, is eligible if all of the following apply:

370.2.2.1 They were the child of the refugee or the child of the person's spouse or civil partner on the asylum application date; and

370.2.2.2 They were under 18 on the asylum application date; and

370.2.2.3 They have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands since they were given leave to enter or remain.

370.3. Individuals with humanitarian protection status, where they have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since they were given leave to enter or remain in the UK.

370.4. The family members of individuals with humanitarian protection status, as defined below:

370.4.1 The spouse or civil partner of a person granted humanitarian protection is eligible if all of the following apply:

370.4.1.1 They were the spouse or civil partner of the person on the asylum application date; and

370.4.1.2 They have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since they were given leave to enter or remain in the UK.

370.4.2 The child of a person with humanitarian protection status to enter or remain, or of the person's spouse or civil partner, is eligible if:

370.4.2.1 They were the person with humanitarian protection status's child or the child of the person's spouse or civil partner on the asylum application date; and

370.4.2.2 They were under 18 on the asylum application date; and

370.4.2.3 They have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands since they were given leave to enter or remain.

370.5. Individuals with discretionary leave, where they have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since they were given leave to enter or remain in the UK.

370.6. The spouse or civil partner of a person granted discretionary leave to enter or remain is eligible if all of the following apply:

370.6.1 They were the spouse or civil partner of the person on the asylum or leave application date; and

370.6.2 They have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since they were given leave to enter or remain in the UK.

370.7. The child of a person with discretionary leave to enter or remain, or of the person's spouse or civil partner, is eligible if:

370.7.1 They were the person with discretionary leave's child or the child of the person's spouse or civil partner on the asylum or leave application date; and

370.7.2 They were under 18 on the asylum or leave application date; and

370.7.3 They have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands since they were given leave to enter or remain.

370.8. Individuals who have extant leave to remain as a stateless person, where they have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since they were granted such leave.

370.9. Family members of individuals with extant leave to remain as a stateless person, as defined below:

370.9.1 The spouse or civil partner of a person granted stateless leave is eligible if all of the following apply:

370.9.1.1 They were the spouse or civil partner of the person on the leave application date; and

370.9.1.2 They have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since they were given leave to enter or remain in the UK.

370.9.2 The child of a person with stateless leave, or of the person's spouse or civil partner, is eligible if:

370.9.2.1 They were the person with stateless leave's child or the child of the person's spouse or civil partner on the asylum or leave application date; and

370.9.2.2 They were under 18 on the leave application date; and

370.9.2.3 They have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands since they were given leave to enter or remain.

370.10. Individuals with leave outside the immigration rules, where they have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since they were given leave to enter or remain in the UK.

370.11. The spouse or civil partner of a person granted leave outside the rules is eligible if all of the following apply:

370.11.1 They were the spouse or civil partner of the person on the asylum or leave application date; and

370.11.2 They have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands throughout the period since they were given leave to enter or remain in the UK.

370.12. The child of a person with leave outside the rules, or of the person's spouse or civil partner, is eligible if:

370.12.1 They were the person with leave outside the rules' child or the child of the person's spouse or civil partner on the asylum or leave application date; and

370.12.2 They were under 18 on the asylum or leave application date; and

370.12.3 They have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands since they were given leave to enter or remain.

370.13. Persons granted leave under one of the Ukraine schemes:

370.13.1 Individuals with leave to enter or remain in the UK under the Ukraine Family Scheme.

370.13.2 Individuals with leave to enter or remain in the UK under the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme (Homes for Ukraine).

370.13.3 Individuals with leave to enter or remain in the UK under the Ukraine Extension Scheme.

370.13.4 Individuals with leave to remain in the UK under the Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme.

370.14. Persons granted leave under one of the Afghan Schemes:

370.14.1 Individuals with leave to enter or remain in the UK under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS).

370.14.2 Individuals with leave to enter or remain in the UK under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP).

370.14.3 Individuals with leave to enter or remain in the UK under the Afghanistan Response Route (ARR).

370.14.4 British Nationals evacuated from Afghanistan under Operation Pitting.

370.14.5 British Nationals evacuated from Afghanistan by the UK government before 6 January 2022.

370.15. Individuals with indefinite leave to remain or enter granted as a victim of domestic abuse where they have been ordinarily resident in the UK since they were given leave to remain.

370.16. Individuals with indefinite leave to remain or enter granted as a bereaved partner, where they have been ordinarily resident in the UK since they were given leave to remain or enter.

370.17. Individuals with Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 leave.

370.18. A child of a person who has received leave under Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 will be eligible in line with rule 370.17 where they have been granted "leave in line" by virtue of being a dependent child of such a person.

370.19. Individuals with Calais leave to remain.

370.20. A child of a person who has received Calais leave to remain will be eligible in line with rule 370.19 where they have been granted "leave in line" by virtue of being a dependent child of such a person.

370.21. British citizens who were born in the British Indian Ocean Territory or, prior to 8 November 1965, in those islands designated as the British Indian Ocean Territory on that date or are direct descendants (i.e. a child, grandchild, great-grandchild and so on) of a person who was born in the British Indian Ocean Territory or, prior to 8 November 1965, in those islands designated as the British Indian Ocean Territory on that date.

371. The individual's immigration permission in the UK may have a 'no recourse to public funds' condition. This does not include education or education funding, so this does not affect an individual's eligibility, which must be decided under the normal eligibility conditions.

Asylum seekers

372. Asylum seekers are not eligible to receive funding. Once an individual's claim has been finally determined, they may be funded in accordance with that status, for example, as a refugee.

Children of Turkish workers

373. A child of a Turkish worker is eligible if:

373.1. The Turkish worker was ordinarily resident in the UK on or before 31 December 2020 and has Turkish European Community Association Agreement (ECAA) rights or extended ECAA leave; and

373.2. The child has been ordinarily resident in the EEA and / or Turkey for at least the previous 3 years on the first day of the apprenticeship and is resident in the UK on or before 31 December 2020.

Those in the armed forces or outside of England

374. As an exception, we will also allow the following individuals to be funded from an employer's apprenticeship service account or using government-employer co-investment:

374.1. Armed forces and Royal Fleet Auxiliary personnel and their family members to undertake a statutory English apprenticeship wherever they are based.

374.2. Individuals of other nationalities serving as members of the British armed forces throughout their period of service and their dependants living with them on their postings, in the same way as members of the British armed forces and their family members. This does not apply to family members who do not join members of the armed forces and instead stay outside of England.

374.3. Members of other nations' armed forces stationed in England and their family members, where the family member has a right to work in the

United Kingdom, if the armed forces' individual has been ordinarily resident in England for three years. We will not fund family members that stay outside of England.

374.4. Crown servants posted overseas who are, or were immediately prior to the posting, ordinarily resident in England.

374.5. Apprentices whose occupation involves significant travel outside of the UK as part of their job (such as in travel or tourism) or work offshore (such as on an oil platform) and they have an identified registered work location in England. Providers must not claim for the additional expense of delivering learning outside of England.

374.6. Those learners resident in the UK who would meet the requirement to spend at least 50% of their working hours in England over the duration of the apprenticeship (see paragraph 30.5) but for whom a reasonable adjustment has been put in place by their employer allowing them to work from home due to a disability.

Further information for 16 to 18-year-olds

375. 16 to 18-year-olds are eligible to be funded for an apprenticeship if any of the following clauses apply:

375.1. They are accompanying or joining parents who have the right of abode, leave to enter, or leave to remain in the UK;

375.2. They are the children of diplomats;

375.3. They are the children of teachers coming to the UK on a teacher exchange scheme;

375.4. They are entering the UK (where not accompanied by their parents) and are British citizens;

375.5. They have a passport that has been endorsed to either show they have the right of abode in the United Kingdom or to show that they have no restrictions on working in the UK;

375.6. They are placed in the care of the local authority;

375.7. They meet the requirements for any other eligible category in this document.

376. Further information on eligibility can be found from the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA).

Individuals who are not eligible for funding:

377. A provider must not claim funding for an individual where any of the following clauses apply:

377.1. They are resident in the United Kingdom on a student visa, unless they are eligible through meeting any other of the categories described in Annex A;

377.2. They are in the United Kingdom on holiday, with or without a visa;

377.3. They have overstayed their immigration or visitor visa;

377.4. They are a family member of a person granted a student visa, have been given immigration permission to stay in the UK and have not been ordinarily resident in the UK for the previous three years on the first day of learning;

377.5. They are ordinarily resident in the Channel Islands or Isle of Man on day one of their apprenticeship, unless they are also ordinarily resident within England;

377.6. They have a biometric residence permit or residence permit imposing a study prohibition or restriction on the individual.

Countries or areas where residency establishes eligibility for our funding

378. British Overseas Territories:

- Anguilla
- Bermuda
- British Antarctic Territory
- British Indian Ocean Territory
- British Virgin Islands
- Cayman Islands
- Falkland Islands
- Gibraltar
- Montserrat
- Pitcairn, Henderson Island, Ducie and Oeno Islands
- South Georgia and the South Sandwich Isles
- St Helena and its dependencies
- Turks and Caicos Islands

379. For funding eligibility purposes, EEA and eligible overseas dependent territories are defined as all member states of the EU and Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Norway and all the eligible British Overseas Territories and EU overseas territories. A list of European Union (EU) member states can be accessed on the EU website.

379.1. Although Switzerland is not part of the formally recognised EEA, its nationals are eligible under various international treaties signed by the UK and Swiss governments.

380. The below is a list of territories that are categorised as being within the EU and or territories that are categorised as being part of the listed countries such that they satisfy our residency requirements for the purposes of the funding rules.

- Denmark (The following is part of Denmark):
  - Greenland
  - Faroe Islands
- Finland (The following is part of Finland and the EU):
  - Aland Islands
- France (The following is part of France and the EU):
  - The French Overseas Department (DOMS) (Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana (Guyana), Reunion and Saint-Pierre et Miquelon)

(The following is not part of the EU but is part of France):
  - New Caledonia and its dependencies French Polynesia
  - Saint Barthélemy
- Germany (The following is part of Germany and the EU):
  - Tax-free port of Heligoland
- Netherlands (The following is part of the Netherlands):
  - Antilles (Bonaire, Curacao, Saba, St Eustatius and St Maarten)
  - Aruba
- Portugal (The following is part of Portugal and the EU):
  - Madeira
  - The Azores
- Spain (The following is part of Spain and the EU):
  - The Balearic Islands
  - The Canary Islands
  - Ceuta
  - Melilla

To note:

Andorra, Macau, Monaco, San Marino and the Vatican are not part of the EU or the EEA. Where we refer to the 'UK and Islands', 'Islands' means the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

Annex B: Revisions to apprenticeship assessment

New for 1 August 2026

382 **Clarification:** We have included context as to why the provider must engage an assessment organisation at the start of the apprenticeship.

383.1 **Clarification:** We have clarified the responsibilities of the assessment organisation.

383.2 **Clarification:** We have clarified that the price negotiated with the assessment organisation must reflect the role of each party in the development, design and delivery of the assessment including quality assurance.

387 **Clarification:** To reflect that apprenticeship assessment can now take place at any stage of the apprenticeship, we have clarified that the term ‘gateway’ or ‘gateway to assessment’ has been replaced by ‘gateway to completion’.

388 **Clarification:** We have clarified the requirements for an apprentice reaching ‘gateway to completion’.

389 **Clarification:** We have clarified the requirements in relation to ongoing conversations between employers and training providers throughout the learning period and regular progress reviews including with the apprentice.

390 **Clarification:** We have clarified the requirements regarding the apprentice’s employment.

393 **Policy Update:** For revised assessment plans where a mandatory qualification fully or substantially covers the required knowledge and skills, the requirement for someone from the occupation in the delivery and grading decision who has not been involved in the training element of the apprenticeship will no longer apply.

395 **Clarification:** We have confirmed the assessment process for integrated standards.

416 **Clarification:** We have included the rules for Certification.

Please note that you can find more information in the '[Changes to apprenticeship assessment 2025 to 2026]' guidance on GOV.UK.

New for 1 August 2026 – Version 1

397 **Policy update:** We have included the rules for moving to a new version of a standard following assessment reform.

Apprenticeship assessment for new apprenticeship starts or those moving to the new version of the assessment plan where the assessment plan for the standard has been revised.

381. The provider (in consultation with the employer) must ensure that the apprentice is prepared for and understands the apprenticeship assessment process.

382. The provider must engage an assessment organisation (AO) at the start of the apprenticeship, the reason being that under the reformed approach, assessment may occur throughout the duration of the apprenticeship rather than solely at the end. Early engagement with the AO will ensure that all parties, have a shared understanding of the assessment methods, expected outcomes and timeframes from the outset.

383. The provider must:

    383.1. Select an assessment organisation who will be responsible for designing all assessment materials in accordance with the assessment plan, ensuring the quality and consistency of assessments conducted and marked within their approved centres.

    383.2. Negotiate a price with the assessment organisation that reflects the role of each party in the development, design and delivery of the assessment including quality assurance. To note:

        383.2.1 The cost of the apprenticeship assessment will vary between standards and we expect providers (or employers if they have chosen to undertake this role) to negotiate with assessment organisations to secure value for money. The cost of the apprenticeship assessment must not exceed 20% of the funding band maximum.

383.2.2 If the overall price of the apprenticeship is more than the funding band maximum for the standard, then the employer must pay in full the difference between the band maximum and the total negotiated price.

384. The employer and provider must ensure that the price agreed, or costs claimed for the apprenticeship includes the amount that has been negotiated with the assessment organisation in relation to assessment costs. This includes the cost of any quality assurance the assessment organisation requires to delegate apprenticeship assessment to the training provider.

385. The provider must contract with the assessment organisation and lead the relationship with them, including where the delivery of apprenticeship training is subcontracted. This allows the provider to make payment to the assessment organisation for their role in the assessment.

385.1. Once a contractual agreement is in place, the provider must record the selected assessment organisation in the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) for every apprentice.

386. The written agreement between the provider and the assessment organisation must include the following:

386.1. The arrangements for the delivery of ALL elements of apprenticeship assessment in accordance with the assessment plan. For example, which elements of apprenticeship assessment will be delivered by the provider and which elements will be delivered by the assessment organisation.

386.2. The cost to be paid to the assessment organisation that reflects their role in the delivery of the assessment, including any quality assurance or moderation of results.

386.3. The arrangements for sharing relevant information about the apprentice, including for example that the employer has verified that the apprentice has demonstrated the required behaviours, to ensure apprenticeship assessment and certification can take place. This information must be presented to the assessment organisation when it is due.

386.4. Arrangements for any re-sits, re-takes and payments.

386.5. Arrangements for a change of circumstances, which may delay, or lead to the cancellation of any part of the assessment.

387. To reflect that apprenticeship assessment can now take place at any stage of the apprenticeship, the term ‘gateway’ or ‘gateway to assessment’ has been replaced by ‘gateway to completion’.

388. An apprentice is deemed to have reached ‘gateway to completion’ when they have satisfied all the requirements set out in the assessment plan, including:

388.1. They have sufficiently demonstrated the required behaviours (described in the occupational standard).

388.2. The achievement of any additional qualifications mandated within the occupational standard.

388.3. The achievement of English and maths qualifications, as per the latest version of the apprenticeship funding rules.

388.4. They have met the minimum duration of the apprenticeship practical period (see paragraph 77).

388.5. Their employer (in consultation with the main provider) is content they have attained sufficient skills, knowledge and behaviours to successfully complete the apprenticeship.

389. Employers and training providers should have ongoing conversations throughout the learning period regarding assessment readiness, mandatory qualifications and competence. This should be supported by regular progress reviews, including with the apprentice to ensure that all the requirements for completion are met, rather than relying on a singular review point.

390. The apprentice must be employed until all elements of the apprenticeship is completed, and they have reached gateway to completion. Consideration must also be given to the potential time needed for any re-sit and / or re-training prior to re-taking any final apprenticeship assessment, the apprentice remains employed during this time.

390.1. The only exception is where the apprentice has been made redundant, and we are funding the apprenticeship to completion. In this case, any main provider responsible for the completion of the training can act as a proxy employer for the purposes of providing any required employer competency statement. This does not mean the main provider records themselves as the employer in the ILR.

391. Once the apprenticeship has started, any change of assessment organisation must be agreed, with both the employer and provider providing the satisfactory withdrawal from the original assessment organisation as per the contractual agreement. The provider (or employer) may choose to re-negotiate the price / roles and responsibilities of the apprenticeship assessment with the new assessment organisation. However, if the overall price is more than the maximum funding band for the standard, then the employer must pay in full the difference between the band maximum and the total negotiated price.

392. While both the employer and the provider will participate in administrative arrangements for assessment, and certain aspects of the apprenticeship assessment may be conducted by the provider, some elements, including external quality assurance, must remain independent and be undertaken by the assessment organisation (subject to paragraph 395 below). Although apprenticeship assessment plans may assign specific apprenticeship assessment responsibilities to the provider, the provider (or sub-contracted provider) delivering the training cannot assess all elements for their own learners or provide quality assurance, except in the case of integrated standards.

393. For revised assessment plans where a mandatory qualification fully or substantially covers the required knowledge and skills, the requirement for someone from the occupation in the delivery and grading decision who has not been involved in the training element of the apprenticeship will no longer apply.

394. For existing apprentices wishing to move to a new version of a standard where the assessment plan has been revised, please see the changing to a new version of a standard section (paragraphs 327 to 343) of these rules and the Changes to apprenticeship assessment 2025 to 2026 guidance.

Assessment process for integrated standards

395. For occupational standards with new and revised assessment plans, where a statutory integrated or mandatory qualification(s) fully or majority covers the requisite knowledge and skills, no further apprenticeship assessment is required, removing the need for involvement from an assessment organisation.

    395.1. In some cases, a statutory integrated or mandatory qualification will cover some of the standard's content but there may be a significant amount of content remaining and an additional apprenticeship assessment may be required. Where this is case, assessment organisations must also comply with the relevant regulatory framework for the apprenticeship assessment. Validation arrangements for integrated degrees may be considered and assessed within external quality assurance processes.

    395.2. For HEIs based outside of England, the provider will be granted access to the APAR in the usual manner for the purposes of providing training. For the purpose of apprenticeship assessment for integrated degrees, Skills England will be responsible for ensuring External Quality Assurance arrangements are in place.

396. All learning must be delivered in the 'practical period' of the apprenticeship.

Changing to a new version of a standard following assessment reform

397. The funding rules in this section apply irrespective of the apprentice's start date and include existing learners who started their apprenticeship in previous funding years.

398. These rules apply where an existing apprentice wishes to move to a newer version of the same standard where the assessment plan has been revised. Please also refer to the Changes to apprenticeship assessment 2025 to 2026 guidance.

399. Apprentices already engaged on the earlier version of a standard may transfer to the latest version of the same standard (that is where the ST number remains the same) at any stage within their apprenticeship subject to meeting the rules on apprenticeship assessment. Where an apprentice is already engaged on a standard which has been replaced with a new apprenticeship standard (that is with a new ST code), this would be treated as a change of programme.

400. Where an apprentice wishes to move to a new version of a standard, the provider must ensure that this is agreed by them, the apprentice and their employer.

    400.1. The provider must make the apprentice and employer aware of the differences between the version of the apprenticeship the apprentice is registered on, in comparison to the one they are transferring to, in terms of the demands of the standard and the requirements of the assessment plan.

    400.2. The main provider and employer must update both the apprenticeship agreement and the training plan to reflect this agreement.

401. Where an apprentice changes version, the provider must make sure that the training and assessment they receive across the whole apprenticeship delivers occupational competence in all aspects of the new standard version and enables them to pass the apprenticeship assessment.

402. Apprentices must not move back to a previous version of the same standard once they have moved to a new version.

403. Apprentices who are returning from a break in learning may return to the version of the standard they were on before their break in learning, where they are able to do so, even where it has been closed to new starts

404. If the apprentice is already registered with an assessment organisation (AO), the provider must:

    404.1. Confirm with the assessment organisation that they will be approved and ready to deliver the apprenticeship assessment for the new version by the time the apprentice requires it, before enabling the apprentice to move versions;

404.2. Inform the assessment organisation when the apprentice has transferred to a new version; and

404.3. Confirm with the existing assessment organisation any change of assessment role, responsibility or withdrawal in line with any contractual agreement with the original assessment organisation should one be in place including where the assessment organisation is no longer required due to changes in assessment plan for the new version.

405. If the apprentice is not registered with an assessment organisation, or the existing assessment organisation is unable to confirm that they will be approved and ready to deliver the assessment for the new version by the time the apprentice requires it, the provider must ensure that an alternative assessment organisation will be available and ready to deliver the apprenticeship assessment for the new version before enabling the apprentice to move versions (subject to the rules in paragraphs 142 and 143).

406. If no assessment organisation will be approved and available to deliver the assessment for the new version by the time the apprentice requires it, the apprentice must not transfer to the new version.

407. Where an apprentice is moving versions, there will be no change to how their standard is recorded on the ILR; the provider must continue to record them on the ILR on the standard that they started on.

408. Where the apprentice is funded through the apprenticeship service, the provider must ensure that the apprentice's details in the service are updated to assign them on to the new version.

409. The provider must make sure that the combined duration of the apprentice's time on the legacy version and the new version meets the apprenticeship minimum duration requirements that applied to the standard on the apprentice's original start date.

410. Where an existing apprentice moves versions, they will continue on the same funding band that they started on.

411. Employers may choose to re-negotiate the price with the main provider / assessment organisation for the new version.

412. Employer-providers may wish to change the cost and / or re-negotiate the price with the assessment organisation for the new version.

412.1. Where the new version does not include any additional assessment (for example where a mandatory qualification provides full or majority coverage of the knowledge and skills), the employer and provider must review and amend, if required, the total negotiated price to remove any assessment cost no longer required.

413. If the employer negotiates an overall price and the overall cost is more than the funding band maximum for the standard that the apprentice started on, then the employer must pay in full the difference between the band maximum for the original standard and the total cost. This cannot be funded from the apprenticeship service account.

414. Any subsequent changes to the learner level price (either TNP1 or TNP2) must be recorded in a timely manner. The employer will only need to approve these, through their apprenticeship service account, if the total programme price increases; they will not need to approve a change to the split between TNP1 and TNP2. This applies to new starts and continuing learners where the price change occurs on or after 1 August 2026.

414.1. Any costs related to a mandatory qualification should be recorded in TNP1

414.2. Where the learner changes to a version where outside of a mandatory qualification there is no additional assessment required and no involvement of an assessment organisation a figure of £0 must be entered in TNP2.

414.3. TNP2 must include any assessment costs related to the assessment plan that is not a mandatory qualification. This is any assessment cost delivered by a provider or assessment organisation.

415. We will monitor changes of price and patterns of behaviour to identify any fraudulent activity.

Certification

416. The assessment organisation (or the provider, in the case of an integrated standard and mandatory qualification only standard) is responsible for claiming the apprenticeship completion certificate from us (including for those apprentices who are not funded by us and recorded in the ILR under Funding Model 99).

417. The assessment organisation must not claim the apprenticeship completion certificate from us until they have received evidence from the employer and provider that the apprentice has met all the requirements of the apprenticeship including, the verification of behaviours and English and / or maths where applicable.

418. Where applicable the provider must apply for, and give, apprentice’s certificates from awarding organisations for achieving a mandatory qualification, and ensure they keep a copy of this in the evidence pack.

Glossary

New for 1 August 2026

Note added / amended definitions of the following terms: Additional payments, Apprenticeship levy, Care experienced, Care leaver, Co-investment, Completion payment, Directly managed and controlled, Gateway to completion, Growth and skills levy, Irrefutable, IR35, Learning actual end date, Learning planned end date, Levy, On-the-job training, Progression profiles, Public Contract Regulations (PCR) 2015, Skills England, Subcontracting, Subcontractor.

The following terms have been deleted: Accelerated apprenticeship, On-programme assessment.

New for 1 August 2026 – Version 1

Note added / amended definitions of the following terms: Funding year, published typical duration, settled purpose (residency), Subcontractor.

New for 1 August 2026 – Version 2

Note amended definitions of the following terms: Apprenticeship levy, Co-investment.

New for 1 August 2026 – Version 3

Note amended definition of the following term: Co-investment.

Active learning

Active learning refers to the training that is being funded through the apprenticeship. There are two types of active learning: OTJT active learning and EM active learning. These refer to off-the-job training and English and maths provision respectively. For new starts from 1 August 2025, providers must comply with the active learning rules for both OTJT and for EM where funding for English and maths provision is being accessed.

Additional payments

Extra funding to help with the additional costs of training specific groups of apprentices. The different types of additional payments are the 16 to 18 payment, the eligible 19 to 24 payment, the employer incentive for eligible foundation apprenticeships, learning support and the care leaver’s bursary.

Adult Skills Fund

The adult skills fund (ASF) has replaced the adult education budget (AEB).

Advanced learner loan

Loans for individuals aged 19+ to provide financial support towards tuition costs. These loans are paid directly to the college or training organisation. These are not applicable to apprenticeships.

APAR

See Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register

Apprentice

An individual who is doing an apprenticeship and is engaged under an apprenticeship agreement (or an alternative English apprenticeship).

Apprentice rate

This is the minimum hourly rate apprentices are entitled to if they are either aged under 19 or aged 19 and over and in their first year of an apprenticeship. We encourage employers to pay more than the apprentice rate. View the National Minimum Wage rates on GOV.UK.

Apprenticeship

A job with training. This includes the training and end-point assessment. The full definitions of an approved English apprenticeship can be found in Part 1 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

Apprenticeship agreement

An apprenticeship agreement is between an employer and an apprentice, in accordance with section A1 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

Apprenticeship certificate

A certificate used to provide formal recognition that an individual has achieved their apprenticeship and is therefore certified.

Apprenticeship levy (see also Growth and skills levy)

A levy on UK employers to raise funds to pay for apprenticeship training and assessment and apprenticeship units. It is charged at 0.5% of an employer’s pay bill, but each employer receives an allowance of £15,000 to offset against their levy payment. As a result of this allowance, only employers with an annual pay bill greater than £3m must pay the levy. Levy payments are made monthly to HMRC.

Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR)

This is a record of organisations that are eligible to receive government funding to train apprentices.

Apprenticeship service account

The area on the Apprenticeship Service where employers can manage their funding and apprentices, view their account balance and plan their spending.

Apprenticeship service record

Where an employer has approved information regarding the apprenticeship / learner within their apprenticeship service account (nb: this information may have been entered by the provider, via their provider account). May also be referred to as a 'commitment'

Apprenticeship Technical Funding Guide

A document which explains how funding works and how this can be claimed for apprenticeship standards – this includes co-investment, funding bands, additional payments, etc. Employers may find this information useful to help understand how employer accounts on the apprenticeship service account operate.

Assessment

See 'End-point assessment'

Block release (delivery model)

A delivery model characterised by the apprentice undertaking active learning in 'blocks' of a week or more at a time (a week is defined as 30 hours). Block release concentrates the learning experience for apprentices, meaning that they will learn a lot of skills and knowledge in a relatively short space of time, ensuring they will be able to perform well on the job when they return.

Break in learning

When an individual takes a break of at least a clear calendar month from their apprenticeship but plans to return to it in the future. This can be instigated by either the provider (in relation to active learning) or by the learner.

Care experienced:

Someone who has been in the care of their Local Authority

'See Care Leaver'

Care leaver

An individual aged 16 to 24 who was (or still is) in the care of their Local Authority.

'Care leaver' is also a legal definition reflecting a period of time in care that makes people eligible for support from a Local Authority and for the apprenticeship care leaver bursary (see 'Additional payments for employers, providers and care leaver apprentices' section for eligibility criteria)

Care leavers' bursary

An additional £3,000 payment (paid in 3 instalments) that we pay to apprentices who are in care or are care leavers, and who started their apprenticeship training on or after 1 August 2023. This payment is to acknowledge that most care leavers struggle financially and live independently without family support. This is paid via the apprentice's provider.

Note: Where apprenticeship training started before 1 August 2023, the eligible care leavers' bursary payment was set at £1,000 (a one-off payment)

Certificates

Issued by awarding bodies to demonstrate an individual's qualifications, for example Level 2 English and maths. During audit, certificates may be checked as proof of prior learning.

Change of circumstance

Changes in an apprentice's personal or employment circumstances, or to their apprenticeship. There are different actions to take and effects on funding depending on the type of change.

Co-investment

This is where the government shares the cost of training and assessing apprentices with employers. The government will support the following types of employers: non-levy payers and levy payers who have run out of levy funds.

For apprenticeship training that starts on or after 1 August 2026, levy employers who have run out of levy funds will be liable for 25% of the cost of apprenticeship training and assessment for apprentices aged 25 or over at the start of their apprenticeship training. For employers who do not pay the levy they will be liable for 5% of the cost of apprenticeship training and assessment for apprentices aged 25 or above at the start of their apprenticeship training. The government will pay the rest up to the funding band maximum.

Complete early

When an apprentice completes all their training and assessment (including end-point assessment) before the planned end date recorded by the provider on the ILR. If the apprenticeship has met the minimum 8-month duration, we will pay any outstanding amounts once we have been notified of completion. View the Technical Funding Guide for details about how payments are made.

Completion payment

A payment we make to providers when an apprentice completes all their learning and undertakes the end-point assessment (the apprentice does not need to pass). This payment is 20% of either the total negotiated price or the funding band maximum, whichever is lower. This payment is not aligned to the assessment costs.

Contract for services

A contract between a contractor and a client (e.g. a provider and an employer).

Contract of service

A contract between an employee and an employer.

Day release (delivery model)

A delivery model usually characterised by the apprentice undertaking active learning for one day per week. Day release ensures that skills, knowledge and behaviours learned in the productive job role are combined with regular off-the-job training.

Degree apprenticeship

A level 6 or 7 apprenticeship that mandates a full bachelor’s or master’s degree. The degree element can either be integrated or non-integrated into the apprenticeship.

An integrated degree apprenticeship has an end-point assessment which is integrated into the degree so there is no separate assessment. Skills England’s policy on degree apprenticeship standards has more information about the different types of integration.

A non-integrated degree apprenticeship features separate processes for the end-point assessment and the achievement of the degree element.

Diagnostic testing / diagnostic assessment

A diagnostic assessment is a form of pre-assessment where tutors can evaluate strengths, weaknesses, knowledge and skills before their instruction. An identical assessment may be given post-instruction to identify if course learning objectives have been met.

Digital account

See ‘Apprenticeship service account’

Directly managed and controlled (part of ‘Subcontractor’ definition) (Intended definition from 1 January 2027 (following the subcontracting review))

Someone who is embedded within a provider’s organisational structure to a degree equivalent to its own staff. For this to be true this person would be: a) closely managed with their hours / working days / location set by the other party; b) offered and / or able to access maternity, holiday and / or sick pay; c) provided with the equipment needed to do the work (e.g. laptop, materials); d) unable to send a substitute. If this is proven to be the case, this is not subcontracting. (Conversely, if the person is functioning as an autonomous operator or an independent, this would be subcontracting).

(This terminology (directly management and controlled) is linked to IR35 – see glossary term).

Disability

See ‘Learning difficulty or disability (LDD)’

Dismissal

When an employee’s contract of employment is terminated.

Distance learning

Learning that is delivered remotely rather than face-to-face. For example, e-learning and webinars.

Double funding

Where multiple funding sources are used for the same activity.

Earnings adjustment statement (EAS)

The earnings adjustment statement is how providers claim funding that cannot be claimed through the individualised learner record.

Education, health and care (EHC) plan

An education, health and care (EHC) plan is for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support. An EHC plan identifies educational, health and social needs and sets out the additional support to meet those needs.

Eligibility

This can refer to either learner eligibility or programme eligibility. In both cases the eligibility criteria must be met in order to access apprenticeship funding. Learner eligibility criteria includes age and the right to work in England. Programme eligibility criteria includes the minimum amount of off-the-job training needed and the minimum duration of training needed.

Eligible costs

Costs that directly relate to the delivery of training. These eligible costs make up the total negotiated price, which is paid for using funds from either an employer's apprenticeship service account or through co-investment.

Employee

An individual who has a contract of service. This does not include individuals who are self-employed.

Employer

An organisation that has a contract of service and an apprenticeship agreement with an apprentice. This can include a Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agency (FJAA). This may also include a company or charity whose PAYE scheme the employer has connected to their apprenticeship service account. References to an 'employer' describe the whole organisation, not individual sites, locations, groups, or companies linked by directors.

Employer agreement

Employers must accept this agreement to get or reserve apprenticeship funding. This agreement sets out the terms for use of the Apprenticeship Service by the employer and the obligations by which the employer agrees to be bound. It applies to all employers including those that pay the apprenticeship levy as well as those employers that do not pay the apprenticeship levy.

Employer incentive payments

Extra funding to support employers with the additional costs of recruitment, retention and progression of foundation apprentices.

Employer-Provider

An employer-provider is a levy-paying organisation that is on the ‘employer-provider’ route of the Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR). They may be a ‘provider’ or a ‘subcontractor’. See also ‘Provider’ and ‘Subcontractor’.

End-point assessment (EPA) (For existing end-point assessment style plans)

An assessment that takes place, to make sure apprentices have reached the necessary level of competence to be awarded an apprenticeship certificate. The requirements for end-point assessment are set out in the assessment plan for each specific standard, this may include allowing aspects of the assessment to be undertaken on programme

End-point assessment organisation (EPAO) (For existing end-point assessment style plans)

An independent organisation that providers can contract to carry out apprenticeship end-point assessments. As part of the changes to apprenticeship assessment EPAOs will be referred to as Assessment Organisations for new style assessment plans going forward.

English and maths

Two separate qualifications that apprentices may require to achieve an apprenticeship. There are different types of English and maths qualifications. For example, functional skills, GCSEs and entry-level.

Evidence pack

A collection of documents and information about an apprentice and their apprenticeship. It provides evidence that the apprentice exists, is eligible for funding and that the apprenticeship is being delivered in line with the funding rules.

Exceptional learning support (ELS)

An additional payment that providers can claim if the cost of supporting an apprentice’s learning support is £19,000 or more in a funding year. See also ‘Learning support’.

Final day

Defined in legislation as the final day of the practical period. This is the equivalent of the learning end date on the ILR (there must be evidence of learning on this learning end date) and internally it is also referred to as the “gateway” between the practical period and the completion of the end-point assessment. The term ‘final day’ is used as a measure in the redundancy policy to determine if the apprentice will be fully funded to completion.

Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agency (FJAA)

An organisation (that is a distinct legal entity, so apprentices have contracts of employment with the FJAA) that recruits and employs apprentices on behalf of employers. FJAAs are targeted at sectors or professions where existing employment models present a structural barrier to the greater use of apprenticeships.

FJAA Conditions of Registration

The Register of Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agencies: Conditions of Registration published on GOV.UK, as revised and amended from time to time.

Foundation apprenticeship

A foundation apprenticeship is a job with training designed to develop entry-level occupational competence and employability skills.

Front-loaded (delivery model)

A delivery model characterised by a significant block of training being delivered at the start of the apprenticeship to help the apprentice gain key knowledge and skills early on. This intensive delivery at the beginning of the apprenticeship can help apprentices to get up to speed quickly before they enter the workplace. Significant front loading is defined as 50% of the planned OTJ hours being delivered in the first 25% of the planned duration. For front-loaded delivery models that do not meet this definition, please contact apprenticeship service support for advice.

Full-time apprentice

An individual engaged on an apprenticeship who works 30 hours or more per week.

Functional skills

A type of English and maths qualification. See also ‘English and maths’.

Funding band

The financial range that the government will contribute towards the cost of delivering training and assessment for an apprenticeship standard. Currently, there are 30 funding bands and the maximum of these bands range from £1,500 to £27,000; this is the most that the government will contribute, including amounts that can be taken from a levy-paying employer’s apprenticeship service account. The funding band does not include costs for English and maths, learning support payments or additional payments for young people.

Funding rules

See ‘Apprenticeship funding rules’.

Funding year

For apprenticeships, the funding year is 1 August to the 31 July.

Gateway

See ‘Final day’.

Gateway to completion

Where the assessment plan for a standard has been revised (see Annex B), a check point at the end of the apprenticeship programme to ensure that the apprentice has completed all necessary requirements in line with the occupational standard and assessment plan and is ready to receive their certificate.

Gateway requirements

These are requirements set out in existing end-point assessment style plans that must be met by the apprentice prior to completing the end-point assessment of the apprenticeship standard. They will include the completion of English and maths qualifications (where applicable) and any on-programme mandatory qualifications (where applicable) along with satisfactory evidence (as determined by the employer, in consultation with the main provider) that the apprentice has achieved the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the standard.

Growth and skills levy

The government is transforming the apprenticeship levy into a new growth and skills levy which will deliver greater flexibility to employers, more opportunities for young people and support the industrial strategy.

Higher apprenticeships

An apprenticeship where the main learning is at level 4 or above. This is equivalent to a certificate of higher education or above.

Host employer

An organisation who hosts an apprentice on a placement which is organised by a Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agency. Also known as ‘Hirers’.

Immigration permission

The permissions, or otherwise, granted by the government of the United Kingdom for an individual to reside here. Learners need immigration permission to study in the UK.

Individualised learner record (ILR)

The primary data collection requested from providers for further education and work-based learning in England. The data is used widely, most notably by the government, to monitor policy implementation, the performance of the sector and to allocate funding.

Inducement

Something that persuades or influences someone to do something. For example, if a provider offered extra training, not required for the apprenticeship, to an employer and included this in the total negotiated price. This is not allowed.

Ineligible costs

Costs that must not be included in the total negotiated price. For example, apprentice travel costs and wages.

Initial assessment

The process of identifying an individual’s learning and support needs to enable the design of an individual training plan. It determines the learner’s starting point for their apprenticeship.

Integrated apprenticeship / standard

See ‘Degree apprenticeship’.

Irrefutable

In relation to electronic and digital signatures, irrefutable signatures are those that cannot be refuted or disproved.

IR35

Off-payroll working rules make sure that a worker (sometimes known as a contractor) pays broadly the same Income Tax and National Insurance as an employee would HMRC has developed several tests to determine whether someone is working inside or outside of IR35: these include control, substitution, mutuality of obligation and the nature of the client relationship.

Knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs)

These are set out in all apprenticeship standards; apprentices are required to learn them to be occupationally competent. KSBs are taught in off-the-job training and tested in the end-point assessment.

Learning actual end date

The date when learning towards the funded apprenticeship ends. This can include off-the-job training and English and maths. There must be evidence of learning on this day. A progress review cannot be used as evidence of learning.

Learning difficulty or disability (LDD)

An apprentice having a learning difficulty or disability may form part of a need's assessment and if it directly impacts on their apprenticeship learning, they could be eligible for learning support. See also 'Learning support'.

Learning gap

Where an apprentice has a gap in their learning or knowledge due to not having obtained certain skills or behaviours.

Learning planned end date

When learning towards the funded apprenticeship is planned to finish.

Learning start date

This is when learning, which is being funded by the apprenticeship budget, begins. It can include off-the-job training and English and maths. It does not include enrolment, initial assessment or induction. There must be evidence of learning on this date.

Learning support

Financial support that providers can claim to help with the cost of any reasonable adjustments directly related to an apprenticeship. Currently a fixed monthly amount of £150. Any extra cost can be claimed through the Earnings Adjustment Statement (EAS). Learning support must only be used to support apprentices who have been assessed as having a learning disability or difficulty (for which a reasonable adjustment is required in order for them to undertake their apprenticeship) and is not to be used to address learning gaps.

Levy

See 'Apprenticeship levy' 'Growth and skills levy'.

Levy-paying employer

An employer, or group of connected employers, with a collective annual pay bill of over £3 million who therefore pay the levy.

Main provider

A main provider is an organisation that is on the ‘main provider’ route of the Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR). They may be a ‘provider’ or a ‘subcontractor’. See also ‘Provider’ and ‘Subcontractor’.

Maternity leave

See ‘Parental leave’

Mentoring

To be included as off-the-job training, mentoring must meet the definition of off-the-job training (new learning, relevant to the apprenticeship, not English and maths, delivered within normal working hours) and be documented in the training plan. The mentor must be a more senior or experienced member of staff. This does not include general line management. The apprentice must not be doing productive work.

Minimum duration

The minimum length of time an apprentice must spend on training.

New provider status (APAR)

A provider is considered new if they have been on APAR or have delivered apprenticeship training for less than one year. Supporting providers are subject to tighter controls in relation to subcontracting during their first year on the APAR.

National Minimum Wage

View the National Minimum Wage rates on GOV.UK. See also ‘Apprentice rate’.

Non-integrated apprenticeship / standard

See ‘Degree apprenticeship’.

Non-levy paying employer

An employer, or group of connected employers, with a collective annual pay bill of less than £3 million who therefore do not pay the apprenticeship levy.

Non-mandatory qualification

A qualification that an apprentice does not require to achieve an apprenticeship. We will pay for any training within a non-mandatory qualification that overlaps with the knowledge, skills and behaviour requirements of the apprenticeship standard. The employer must pay for any peripheral costs such as registration, examination and certification.

Normal Working hours

The apprentice's paid hours, not including any overtime. Legally, there are maximum weekly working hours.

Off-the-job training (OTJT)

Defined as training, which a) is delivering new knowledge, skills and behaviours, b) is directly relevant to the apprenticeship, c) is delivered in the apprentice's normal working hours (but outside of their productive job role) and d) excludes ineligible activities such as standalone English and maths qualifications. The volume delivered must be based on the published minimum requirement for the standard, adjusted to account for evidenced prior learning that has been identified in the initial assessment of the apprentice.

Onboarding (of the apprentice)

Following the initial assessment, onboarding of the apprentice will include agreeing a price with the employer and developing, agreeing and signing any relevant paperwork to support the apprenticeship, such as the training plan. Onboarding does not include training delivery and therefore does not count towards the off-the-job training policy.

Online learning

See 'Distance learning'.

On-programme End-point Assessment (On-programme EPA)

Any assessment activity related to the end point assessment where the standard allows this to be delivered prior to gateway.

On-the-job training

Learning specific to the job role that is not covered by the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the apprenticeship.

Parental leave

When an employee takes time off work due to maternity leave, paternity leave, shared parental leave or adoption leave. Depending on the duration, parental leave may count as a break in learning, See also ‘Break in learning’.

Part time apprentice

An individual engaged on an apprenticeship who works less than 30 hours per week.

Paternity leave

See ‘Parental leave’.

Pay bill

The total amount of money employers pay their employees each year.

Person of significant control

A person with significant control (PSC) is someone who owns or controls a company. They’re sometimes called ‘beneficial owners’. Most PSCs are those who hold more than 25% of shares in the company, more than 25% of voting rights in the company and the right to appoint or remove the majority of the board of directors.

Personal learning record (PLR)

The personal learning record (PLR) allows individual apprentices access to their past and current achievement records. These can be shared with schools, colleges, further education training providers, universities or employers when making an application to further their education, training and employment.

Practical period

The period for which the apprentice is expected to work and receive training under an approved English apprenticeship agreement. The start date and the end date of the practical period (as recorded on the apprenticeship agreement and training plan) must align with the planned learning start date and the learning end date on the ILR.

Previous rules

There are different funding rules for different apprenticeship start dates. Providers and employers must follow the funding rules that apply to each apprentice. View the apprenticeship funding rules for previous years.

Prior learning

Previous learning that may count towards an apprenticeship. For example, work experience, education, training and qualifications. Before a learner starts an apprenticeship, providers must do an initial assessment of their existing KSBs to check if they are eligible, then reduce the cost and content of the apprenticeship if necessary. See also ‘Minimum duration’.

Prison leaver

Individuals who have previously served a custodial sentence.

Productive job role

The job for which the employer has employed the apprentice.

Progress review

The provider must undertake a progress review, with the employer and apprentice, to discuss the progress of the apprentice against their training plan. These must be carried out at least every 3 calendar months, unless there is an evidenced delivery reason, such as module length, which means an alternative frequency is more appropriate.

Progression profiles

Progression profiles, developed in conjunction with employers and published by Skills England, demonstrating progression routes from T-Levels.

Provider

An organisation holding a funding agreement with us through which we directly route funds from an employer’s apprenticeship service account or co-investment. This may be an organisation that is either on the ‘main provider’ route or the ‘employer-provider’ route of the Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR). This organisation will have the overall responsibility for the training conducted by themselves and their (delivery) subcontractors and will hold the contractual relationship for the end-point assessment organisation of the apprentice.

See also ‘Main provider’ and ‘Employer-provider’.

Provider Agreement

A legally binding funding agreement between a provider and the Secretary of State. Providers must accept this agreement to manage apprenticeships on the apprenticeships service and receive funding from the Secretary of State.

Public Contract Regulations (PCR) 2015

The Public Contract Regulations (PCR) 2015 was replaced by the Procurement Act (PA) 2023 on 24 February 2025. PCR 2015 will continue to govern existing procurements whilst PA23 applies to new ones.

Published typical duration

Each apprenticeship standard shows a typical duration; this gives providers an indication of the typical length of the programme (this duration has been determined by evidence submitted by trailblazer groups and approved by Skills England's approval committee). However, providers are still able to agree a different duration with the employer, subject to meeting the minimum duration requirements.

From new starts from 1 August 2025 this duration is no longer linked to the number of off-the-job hours that need to be delivered to be eligible for funding. The minimum off-the-job training hours for each standard can be found on the front of each standard.

Quality Framework for Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agencies

The framework set out by the Department that includes Quality Indicators to which the Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agency must adhere, as updated and amended from time to time.

Receiving employers

Employers (levy or non-levy paying) who receive a transfer of apprenticeship funds from a levy-paying employer. See also 'Transfer of funds'.

Redundancy

The statutory definition of redundancy (Employment Rights Act 1996) identifies three sets of circumstances (business closure, workplace closure, diminished requirements of the business for employees to do work of a particular kind) and an employee's dismissal can be considered to be by reason of redundancy if one of these circumstances is the reason for the dismissal. Redundancy includes voluntary redundancy. See also 'Change of circumstance'.

Register of Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agencies

A list of organisations that are eligible to deliver the FJAA model of employing apprentices directly (for the duration of their apprenticeship) and arranging placements with host employers. To be added to the register, organisations must pass assessments on due diligence, financial health, quality, capacity and capability.

Resit

Taking a mandatory qualification or end-point assessment again, without extra learning.

Restart

When an apprentice:

1) restarts after withdrawing from the programme and joins the same apprenticeship programme from the point that they previously left or;
2) restarts after an agreed break in learning and joins the same apprenticeship programme from the point that they previously left or;
3) restarts after transferring provider and joins the same apprenticeship programme from the point that they previously left.

Retake

Taking the end-point assessment again, after further training.

Self-directed distance learning

When an apprentice is working alone with online material. The material is not delivered in real time and there is no interactive support.

Sending employers

Levy-paying employers who have unused apprenticeship funds in their apprenticeship service account and transfer them to another employer. See also 'Transfer of funds'.

Settled Purpose (residency)

A stable and ongoing reason for living in a place as part of normal life, rather than a short-term or incidental stay (for example, for work, study, or family). This is not a definitive legal interpretation. The meaning of "settled purpose" is ultimately determined by the courts.

Skills England

An executive agency sponsored by the Department for Work and Pensions. You can find more information on the Skills England website.

Skills scan

A skills scan is an assessment of the individual's knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs), as they relate to the apprenticeship standard. We are not prescriptive as to what tool or method is used for the skills scan, but it must evaluate and document the extent to which the individual meets each KSB and therefore which elements of the standard do not need to be re-taught. The assessment should be validated as accurate by the individual’s line manager / employer.

Sole trader

A person who conducts business by their own personality and not with any other corporate personality.

Special educational needs (SEN)

Learning, physical, or sensory needs that make it harder for someone to learn than most individuals the same age.

Standards

An apprenticeship standard describes the occupation to which it relates and sets out the outcomes that persons seeking to achieve the standard are expected to attain in order to successfully complete the apprenticeship. Apprenticeship standards are approved and published by Skills England. Apprentices can only be enrolled against an apprenticeship standard once it is identified as ‘approved for delivery’ on the Skills England website.

Subsidy control

The UK subsidy control regime began on 4 January 2023. It enables public authorities, including devolved administrations and local authorities, to give subsidies that are tailored to their local needs, and that drive economic growth while minimising distortion to UK competition and protecting our international obligations.

Subcontract

An agreement entered into between the provider and a subcontractor.

Subcontracting

Any delivery to an apprentice’s programme of learning by a separate legal entity (a subcontractor). It does not matter how this training is delivered (e.g. face to face, online) or whether it is described as a service. Learning support would only be considered to be subcontracting if the separate legal entity delivering the learning support was also the party delivering the programme of learning.

Subcontractor (Definition to use until the completion of the subcontracting review).

A separate legal entity or an individual (not an employee) that has an agreement (called a subcontract) with a provider to deliver any element of the education and training we fund. A separate legal entity includes but is not limited to companies in the provider’s group, other associated companies and sole traders. An individual could include a person who is a sole trader, self-employed, a freelancer or someone who is employed by an agency, unless those individuals are working under the direct management of the provider and are controlled in the same way as the provider's own employees. This does not include relationships between the provider and the end-point assessment organisation or the provider and other third parties providing services such as marketing.

Subcontractor (Intended definition from 1 January 2027 (following the subcontracting review))

A separate legal entity or an individual that has a contract for service or a written agreement with a provider to deliver, for a fee, any element of the education and training we fund. A separate legal entity can include but is not limited to companies in the provider's group. An individual could include a person who is a sole trader or is self-employed.

We do not consider the following to be a subcontractor: a) an individual who has a contract of employment with the provider; b) an individual who has a written secondment arrangement with the provider (so long as they have no financial stake in the company they are legally employed by or released from); c) a person who is 'directly managed and controlled' (see glossary definition) in the same way as the provider's own employees; d) an assessment organisation; and e) a company or individual who is solely providing a non-training delivery service such as marketing.

Summary of training document

A document, issued by the provider, when an apprentice either withdraws from their foundation apprenticeship prior to completion, moves to a different main provider whilst remaining on-programme or moves to a different apprenticeship programme. This document will detail the training that has been undertaken up to the point of change – enabling any subsequent provider to easily identify any prior learning.

Supporting Provider

A supporting provider is an organisation that is on the 'supporting provider' route of the Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR). They may only act as a 'subcontractor'. See also 'Subcontractor'.

The apprenticeship service

The digital interface to services designed to support the uptake of apprenticeships. The service is aimed primarily at employers who engage with main providers and apprenticeship assessment organisations to deliver and facilitate the apprenticeship. It allows employers to choose and pay for the apprenticeship training that they want and will support the uptake of apprenticeships. The service contains information coming from a range of different sources, including main providers.

Total negotiated price (TNP)

The price negotiated between an employer and main provider for all the eligible costs of an apprentice's training and assessment, after relevant prior learning has been taken into account. See also 'Eligible costs' and 'Ineligible costs'. Also referred to as 'total agreed price' within employer accounts.

Training

See off-the-job training.

Training plan

The training plan sets out the training that has been identified through the initial assessment as required to complete the apprenticeship. The plan also outlines how the apprentice will be supported to successfully achieve the apprenticeship. It must be signed by the apprentice, their employer and the provider and all parties must retain a current signed and dated version.

Transfer of funds

When levy-paying employers transfer any unused apprenticeship funds in their account to other employers.

Transfer to a new employer

See 'Change of circumstances'.

Transfer to a new provider

See 'Change of circumstances'.

UKPRN

This is an 8-digit number from the UK Register of Learning Providers (UKRLP), every provider (including every subcontractor) who delivers apprenticeship training and/or assessment must register with the UKRLP.

Unique learner number (ULN)

A 10-digit reference number. This can be used to access or edit the personal learning record (PLR) of anyone that is in education or training and older than 14.

Withdrawal

When an apprentice leaves or stops taking part in their apprenticeship before they have completed it. This could be temporary (i.e. a break in learning) and the apprenticeship can be restarted. See also 'Change of circumstances'.

Work experience

The jobs that someone has had or the type of work they have done in the past. Also, when someone works for an employer on a short-term basis. See also 'Prior learning'.

Working hours

See ’Normal working hours’.

Written agreement

The main provider must have a written agreement in place with the end-point assessment organisation and make payment to them for conducting the end-point assessment. The written agreement must set out the arrangements for end-point assessment including arrangements for any retakes and the transaction of payments.

Zero-hour contracts

Contracts which do not specify a set number of hours for the employee to work.

UK Government

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