

## Department for Education & Education and Skills Funding Agency Guidance - Covid-19

The Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) have now released their guidance with regards to apprenticeships during the COVID19 pandemic – [see here](#). Beyond these measures the usual funding guidance will apply to support apprentices who cannot currently continue in learning or who fall out of work as a result of COVID-19.

Health Education England (HEE) are currently drafting further guidance documents and FAQs which will be hosted on [HASO](#) and are in daily communication with the ESFA and will continue to lobby for greater flexibility in their approach to apprenticeships; in particular, for apprentices undertaking programmes to become registered practitioners who already meet the registration criteria, HEE are also seeking to gain allowances for EPA.

HEE would urge Trusts to where ever possible:

- Not pause learners on the apprenticeship service unless absolutely necessary – this will support the provider network and mitigate the risk of losing key Independent Training Providers (ITPs) for our programmes. If you are going to pause apprentices, please consider each apprentice on an individual basis and where apprentices can be supported to continue learning.
- Work with your training providers to deliver training remotely and via e-learning as far as is practicable and if it doesn't impact too significantly on workforce capacity. Off the Job Training (OTJ) will still need to comply with OTJ rules i.e. taking place during working hours.
- Use various methods of OTJ, consider e-learning and remote delivery. Remember that when apprentices are practicing their new skills during the working day, this can be considered as continuing their apprenticeship training and we recommend you have a conversation with your training provider to establish how this can be recorded.
- Talk to your training providers about End Point Assessment (EPA) arrangements and see if these can be modified and remote assessments delivered wherever it is practicable and possible. We appreciate that for some apprenticeships this will not be practicable and HEE are doing what they can to try to remove barriers; for example, with Nursing Associate apprentices on version 1 HEE are looking to establish whether they can convert them to version 3 which does not require a mandatory observation as part of the EPA.

24/03/2020

- Where apprentices are ready for assessment but cannot be assessed due to COVID-19 issues, EPAs may be rescheduled and apprentices whose gateway is delayed can have an extension to the assessment time frame.
- Breaks in learning rules have been relaxed to allow employers and training providers to initiate breaks in learning (as opposed to the break being initiated by the apprentice). As previously stated, we recommend this be a final resort due to the financial impact on the provider market and subsequent risk to our programmes due to ITP's being forced to exit the market.

HEE Relationship Managers are keen to support individual employers with any issues and would request you get in touch to let them know about any plans you have for the foreseeable future and they will endeavour to offer guidance where possible.

[Click here](#) for HEE Relationship Managers details.