

News story: Continued increased flexibility for learners in receipt of low wage, Adult Education Budget (AEB) 2019 to 2020

The Adult Education Budget (AEB) low-wage trial, which started in 2018 to 2019, will continue in 2019 to 2020, enabling providers in receipt of ESFA funded AEB to fully fund learners, who are employed and in receipt of a low wage and cannot contribute towards the cost of co-funding fees. The low-wage threshold has been increased to £16,009.50.

The trial will help to increase AEB participation and lift social mobility barriers to learning for those who would not otherwise engage due to course fees being unaffordable. It will also support those that are in low paid employment and are wanting to further progress in work and in their chosen career.

The current AEB fee remission rules focus on providing full funding for eligible unemployed adults, young people (aged 19 to 23) with skills below level 2, and adults aged 19 and over, without English and maths up to level 2. Currently individuals who do not fall into one of these categories may have to contribute 50% towards the cost of their learning (commonly known as co-funding).

The 2019 to 2020 eligibility requirements for learners to receive full funding during the trial are:

- those that are eligible for co-funding for provision, up to and including level 2, and,
- earn less than £16,009.50 annual gross salary

To confirm learner eligibility providers must:

- have seen evidence of the learner's gross annual wages in these circumstances, for example, this could be a wage slip or Universal Credit statement, within 3 months of the learner's learning start date, or a current employment contract, which states gross monthly/annual wages
- enter the ILR monitoring code (363) for every eligible learner they fully fund through this trial, this is imperative as we will use data collected to inform future adult funding policy development

In the 2019 to 2020 funding year adult education functions are being devolved to a number of specified Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) and the Greater London Authority (GLA). As a result, the extension of the trial only applies to individuals resident in areas of England outside of the MCAs/GLA areas undertaking ESFA funded AEB learning. The MCAs/GLA will publish their own

funding rules that will apply to providers in receipt of devolved AEB funding.

The requirements associated with the trial and further information about AEB devolution, are available in the ESFA adult education budget (AEB) funding rules 2019 to 2020.