

Subject:**LEVEL 2 YOUTH TRAINING AND LEVEL 3 APPRENTICESHIP PILOT PROJECTS****Support for Pilot Participants with a Learning Difficulty and/or Disability****Circular Number:** YPSD 02/15**Date of Issue:**

2015

Target Audience:

- Principals/Directors/Chief Executives of Further Education Colleges
- Chairs of Governing Bodies
- FE College Finance Officers
- Colleges NI
- College Learning Support Co-ordinators
- College Student Support Officers
- College Discrete Provision Managers

Summary of Contents:

This circular outlines the support arrangements for participants enrolled on the level 2 youth training and level 3 apprenticeship pilots commencing in September 2015, who have a learning difficulty and/or disability.

The following key points should be noted:

- The Department will be providing an earmarked disability support fund to each college to help meet the additional costs of supporting pilot participants with a learning difficulty and/or disability.
- This funding is entirely separate from the current Additional Support Fund (ASF) provided by the Department.
- Guidance on funding, recording and administration of the disability support fund for pilot participants will be issued in a separate correspondence.
- Disability support in the workplace for level 2 and level 3 employed pilot participants is available through DEL funded programmes including Workable (NI) and Access to Work (NI). For further information, employers and employed participants should contact the Department's Disability Employment Service – <http://www.delni.gov.uk/des>

Enquiries:

Any enquiries about the contents of this circular should be addressed to:

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Status of Contents:

Information

Related Documents:**Superseded Documents:**

N/A

Expiry Date:

July 2017

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Background

1. Following the publication of the new apprenticeship strategy 'Securing our Success' and the new youth training strategy 'Generating our Success', the Department for Employment and Learning is undertaking a series of pilots commencing in September 2015. The main focus of these pilots will be to test the development of new curriculum for the new youth training and apprenticeships system but the Department will seek to test wider aspects of the new system where possible.
2. Currently there are separate disability support arrangements for those in training (i.e. Training for Success (TfS)), ApprenticeshipsNI mainstream further education (FE).
3. Due to the complexities and variations in the current disability support arrangements, the Department will be providing an earmarked fund to each college to support participants on these pilots with a learning difficulty and/or disability.

Eligibility

4. This funding provision is only available for participants enrolled on the level 2 youth training and level 3 apprenticeship pilots who have a learning difficulty and/or disability. It is entirely separate from the current Additional Support Fund (ASF) provided by the Department.
5. This provision is earmarked, limited, and discretionary, and can be provided as an enhancement to the funding available to colleges for Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (SLDD), under the FE Funding Formula. The purpose of this funding is to provide additional technical and/or personal support (e.g. braille, specialist software, signer) for individual students, who are in mainstream provision.
6. The funding is intended to help colleges meet the necessary additional cost of provision for pilot participants with a disability and/or learning difficulty, for whom an additional support need has been identified. Colleges must provide a report for the 2015/16 and 2016/17 academic years on a breakdown of the total expenditure under this provision and the number of students supported (personal support costs - e.g. support worker costs, interpreter costs, staff costs, technical support costs, and all other costs).
7. It should be noted that disability support in the workplace for level 2 and level 3 employed participants is available through DEL funded programmes including Workable (NI) and Access to Work (NI). For further information, employers and employed participants should contact the Department's Disability Employment Service – <http://www.delni.gov.uk/des>

Exclusions

8. This provision cannot be used to support:
 - provision delivered by a third party or sponsored providers;

- students enrolled in Further Education who are in receipt of disability support through the ASF;
- students enrolled in Higher Education (HE) in FE colleges who are in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance under the FE Awards arrangements;
- participants in receipt of assistance under any other DEL-funded programmes, such as TfS, ApprenticeshipsNI, EU-funded programmes, or full-cost recovery provision; and
- participant travel costs (for example, taxi/bus hire,) or any notional costs associated with providing additional support.

General

9. All expenditure under this provision should be based on objective assessment of need and supported by professional assessment, where deemed necessary. Further guidance is available in the Equality Commission's Disability Discrimination Code of Practice for Further and Higher Education.
10. All support should be in the form of additional technical and/or personal support purchased by the college.

Personal Support

11. Personal support is categorised as follows:

- **Specialist Tutor/Adviser**, such as hearing or visual impairment tutor, IT consultancy, speech therapist or counsellor;
- **Lecturer** or IT adviser (including technician);
- **Interpreter** (for students with a hearing impairment);
- **Support Worker/Classroom Assistant**, such as examination support or reader;
- **Notetaker**, such as shorthand notetaker and/or typist, for assistance with student notes;
- **Assessment**: one-off assessments, (for example, by an educational psychologist), where the assessment is considered necessary, and is in addition to the college's standard assessment and enrolment procedure (colleges should take all reasonable steps to ensure a student provides evidence of a disability, before progressing any assessment); and
- **Staff time** specifically for meetings with students.

Technical Support

12. This provision may also be used to purchase specialised enabling equipment, such as braille, Reading Edge equipment, IT adaptations, specialist software and related licences and IT hardware and hearing loops.
13. Colleges may give consideration to leasing specialist equipment, if it is required for a short period of time and is the most cost-effective option.

14. Technical support does not include photocopying, books, printers, general software, and capital expenditure, such as lifts or items which will become the personal property of pilot participants.

Assessment Guidance

15. Assessment should be carried out, taking into consideration the evidence base, course structure, reasonableness and student capabilities, to justify the level of support agreed.

16. Upon enrolment, pilot participants, for whom funding is being claimed, should be actively involved in decisions relating to their course of study, support needs and educational and developmental progression. Progression routes must, as a minimum, ensure that the pilot participant has a clear pathway identified for future study, training provision or potential employment.

Supplementary Learning Agreement

17. In order to ensure that the pilot participant is actively involved in the process of making any appropriate adjustments, colleges should complete and retain a **Supplementary Learning Agreement (SLA)**. An SLA template is attached at **Annex B** and must be completed for all pilot participants.

18. SLAs can be maintained in either paper or electronic format. Records maintained electronically should highlight student involvement in the process, including signature evidence (**electronic signatures are not acceptable**).

19. The following conditions apply to all pilot participants for whom this provision is being claimed:

- a) an enrolment form must be completed;
- b) all participants, declaring a disability and/or learning difficulty at enrolment, should be interviewed by the college's Learning Support Co-ordinator (or other appropriate member of staff); and
- c) the Learning Support Co-ordinator (or other appropriate member of staff) should assess the participant's support needs or arrange for an assessment to be completed. An assessment form must be completed and agreed by both parties.
- d) An **individual** SLA must be completed for each pilot participant.

20. The minimum data requirements to be retained, in respect of each pilot participant, in addition to normal enrolment data, include:

- nature of disability and/or learning difficulty;
- details of additional needs/level of support required (this should include details of personal and/or technical support, and associated costs);

- evidence of eligibility to support funding (e.g. educational psychologist's report, Statement of educational needs, GP letter etc);
- expected duration of support; and
- agreed progression route/action plan.

21. A minimum of two reviews per year must also be carried out in respect of each pilot participant. Details of reviews should be recorded, signed and dated, by both the college representative and the student. It is important that records are maintained for those reviews arranged for which pilot participants failed to attend. Reviews carried out by telephone or e-mail are not considered appropriate.

All agreements must be signed by both the appropriate college representative and the pilot participant or pilot participant representative (electronic signatures are not acceptable).

Audit

22. Colleges are required to ensure that SLAs are completed for all pilot participants being assisted through the earmarked disability support fund.

23. In addition, the Director of each FE college shall:

- ensure that the college uses this provision in a manner consistent with its intended purpose and complies with all terms and conditions attaching to the award; and
- provide such returns as may be required by the Department and comply with any audit/inspection arrangements.

Key Points to Note

- **Where additional support has been identified during any part of an academic year, the pilot participant will be entitled to that support for the entire academic year.**
- **Where the course spans more than one year, but the additional support is required for one year only, the pilot participant will be entitled to support for that academic year only.**
- **It is mandatory for colleges to complete an SLA for each individual pilot participant for the purposes of claiming the disability support funding.**
- **Failure to comply with these terms and conditions could result in recoveries being sought by the Department from the college concerned.**

LEARNING DIFFICULTY AND/OR DISABILITY DECLARATION FORM 2015/16 – 2016/17

This declaration form is **only** for participants enrolled on the level 2 youth training and level 3 apprenticeship pilots.

Completion of this form is necessary, in the absence of other evidence, to secure earmarked funding provision for participants enrolled on the level 2 youth training and level 3 apprenticeship pilots who have a learning difficulty and/or disability.

This form must be associated with the participant’s Supplementary Learning Agreement and must be signed in Section 2 by a ‘designated person’, who can confirm the declared learning difficulty and or disability. A list of examples of designated persons, who may qualify, is provided below. Section 2 must not be signed by a college representative.

PARTICIPANTS DETAILS

Participant’s Name: _____ Student No. _____

Date of Birth: _____

Course Title: _____

Declared Learning Difficulty and/or Disability: _____

DECLARATION

Name and position of designated person, declaring the learning difficulty and/or disability:

Signature of person, declaring the learning difficulty and/or disability:

_____ **Date:** _____

College representative signature:

_____ **Date:** _____

Examples of designated persons, who may be deemed qualified to declare the learning difficulty and or disability, stated on this form:

- school representative [e.g. special school or special unit within a school],
- Health Trust representative,
- Doctor [GP/ Specialist],
- Psychologist,
- Psychiatrist,
- Social Worker.

NB: The above list is not exhaustive and any other person, **independent of the college**, who deems themselves qualified to declare a learning difficulty and/or disability on behalf of a learner, should record their position. **This will not, however, guarantee that the declaration can be accepted by the college.**

ANNEX B

SUPPLEMENTARY LEARNING AGREEMENT (SLA) – Mainstream Provision

An SLA form must be completed, updated and retained for each individual participant in order to qualify for funding from this provision. All sections of the SLA must be completed.

Academic Year:			
Participant Name:			
Student Number:			
Date of Birth:			
FE Provision			
Course Title:			
Course Level:			
Course Code:			
Course start/end date:	Start Date:	End Date:	
Course Duration: (weeks)	Year 1 (✓)		Year 2 (✓)
Number of Hours per week:	Part-time (✓)		Full-time (✓)
Confirmation that the student is <u>not</u> in receipt of assistance under any other DEL-funded programmes:		Yes	
Disability Stated:			

Disability Evidence Provided:	Yes		No	
Type of disability Evidence Provided:				
Copy of Evidence Attached:	Yes		No	

Assessment of Needs	
Date Assessment of Needs Completed:	
Name of Person Completing Assessment of Needs:	
Position in College:	

Have home to college transport arrangements been discussed with the student?	Yes	No
If 'yes', please provide details. [e.g. community transport, parents etc.]		

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Additional Support Requirements		
Personal Support – Please Specify: (Classroom, Additional Tuition; etc.)		Duration of Support:
		Cost of Support:

Technical Support / Equipment:		Duration of Support:
		Cost of Support:
Further Assessment:	Date of Assessment:	Cost of Assessment:
Action Plan: (add as necessary)		
No:	Actions	Completion Date:
1		
2		
3		
Pathway and Progression Route:		

Confidentiality Agreement

Certain details on this form will be stored by the college for administrative purposes. Personal data will be held in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act. Some information will be forwarded to college staff, the Department for Employment and Learning and agents appointed by them.

I realise that if I choose not to disclose a disability it may hinder my progress on a course. If support is provided, I agree to respond appropriately. Failure to do so may cause the support to be withdrawn.

Participant signature:		Date:	
Participant representative (if appropriate):	Name and position:	Signature:	Date:
College representative:	Name and position:	Signature:	Date:

Progression Reviews for participants enrolled on the level 2 youth training and level 3 apprenticeship pilots assisted under this provision.

1	Details:		
	Participant or representative signature:		Date:
	College representative:	Name and position:	Signature:
		Date:	
2	Details:		

Participant or representative signature:		Signature:	Date:
College representative:	Name and Position:	Signature:	Date:

*** Examples of acceptable evidence - Educational Psychologists' Report; Statement of Educational Needs; GP Letter; Signed Learning Difficulty and/or Disability Declaration Form.**