

**Oxford Professional Education Group**

**Additional Learning Support in Apprenticeships Policy**

**Date August 2020**

**Reviewed October 2023**

**Date for next Policy Review October 2024**

### **1. Additional Learning Support Funding (LSF) from the Skills Funding Agency (ESFA):**

Learning support funding is available to help us to provide additional support activity (over and above what is usually delivered by OXPEG) to meet individual learning needs of apprentices.

This will enable them to achieve their learning goal and make the most of their potential.

It can include, for example, support with a learning difficulty (including English and Maths), specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, and to help meet the costs of reasonable adjustments as set out in the Equality Act 2010 (such as the purchase of equipment which will prevent a disabled person from being at a substantial disadvantage).

The learner does not have to be registered disabled or have a formal learning difficulty if we have evidence of the need.

Learning support is not to be used to deal with the everyday difficulties that are not directly associated with a learner's learning on the programme.

It is not for the purposes of meeting financial difficulties.

### **2. ESFA Funding Rules and evidence requirements:**

The fund is flexible and is paid at a monthly fixed rate of £150 (according to the start and end dates set against the additional funding section on the ILR/Commitment Statement).

It is monitored and audited by the ESFA to ensure good value for money.

As a Provider we must evidence that we:

- **Carry out a robust assessment of the needs and record the outcomes to identify the learning need;**
- **Plan the support to be delivered and the period for which the additional support is required;**
- **Deliver the support to meet the needs and review the progress and continuing needs/funding requirement.**

This evidence is required even if the learner achieves the whole Standard. The initial assessment documents and Additional Learning Support Plan will form the basis of the evidence within the learner's ILP/Commitment Statement.

The support can be triggered at any point during the programme, though in most cases it is anticipated that it will be identified at the start of programme, particularly where support with functional skills is required, as all learners will have completed an initial assessment and diagnostic. It will be 'turned off' early if the learner no longer needs the support.

### **3. Examples of learning support that may require additional funding:**

a) Support for Functional Skills: Additional Maths, English may be appropriate where the learner is 'working at' the level below that which is being undertaken on the programme as determined by a diagnostic assessment (e.g. Intermediate Apprentice is working at/has a recommended level of Entry Level 3 and is undertaking Level 1 Functional Skill). In this example, the Apprentice may need additional funding (after looking at the results in more detail).

OXPEG will consider what needs to be done over and above the support they already offer as part of all Apprenticeships. The 'extra' does not include extra work for the learner but means extra support given by OXPEG.

Additional learning support funding is not to be used to replace the need for a learner to complete ESOL, where this would be a more appropriate learning route. The planned period of support for English/Maths will usually mirror the length of time planned for the Functional Skill itself (on the ILR/CS) but can be for a shorter time. If an Intermediate Apprentice is stepping up on their functional skill, funding can still be claimed if the results warrant this. If the step up is not a requirement (in that the learner does not already hold a valid Level 1 exemption) OXPEG will consider if it would be more appropriate for the learner to work towards Level 1 first and progress to Level 2 once completed. The decision will be agreed with the learner as part of the IAG and agreement of the Individual Learning Plan/CS.

b) Where the results of an assessment do not reflect the need for the additional support: After a period on the programme, it may be identified that the learner is struggling, despite the results of the initial assessment. If this is the case, and if specialist support is required (e.g. from a functional skill specialist) this may be classed as additional support. The Additional Learning Support Plan must evidence the need on an individual basis following the rules in Section 2 above. This 'on programme' identification of a need may also be appropriate where a learner has not declared a support need at the start of their programme (such as dyslexia – see section e).

c) English/Maths support where an Advanced Apprentice has an evidenced Level 2 exemption:

Where an Advanced Apprenticeship already holds an evidenced Level 2 exemption for their English/Maths (e.g., GCSE A\*-C) the ESFA does not expect to fund further learning in English/Maths to achieve the Standard.



However, where the Apprentice holds an evidenced level 2 exemption but is assessed as 'working at' level 1 or below in English/Maths and their current level of skills will prevent them from achieving the framework, the T/A and OXPEG has three options:

- Provide informal unfunded English/Maths support to enable the rest of the Standard to be completed – this will be the case in most instances.
- Recommend that the learner repeats the English/Maths functional skill at level 2 where the assessment results show 'working at' level 1 or below and the need to repeat the English/Maths at level 2 is fully justified (the qualification must be necessary for them to achieve the apprenticeship and there must be a significant amount of learning required).

This will not be funded as part of the Apprenticeship.

In deciding the most appropriate route, OXPEG will take account of the full initial assessment and diagnostic results, and the skills areas that require support to achieve the Standard. OXPEG will consider whether the learner just needs to 'brush up' on the skills rather than or undertake a full functional skill, also assessing whether the learner has a specific learning difficulty (such as dyslexia) that may require support rather than a lack of English and Maths skills.

d) English/Maths support where an Intermediate Apprentice has an evidenced Level 2 exemption:

Again, the ESFA does expect to fund further learning in English and Maths where an evidenced level 2 exemption is in place for the learner. Any additional English/Maths support required to achieve the intermediate standard will be informal.

e) Specific Learning difficulty: Specific learning difficulty covers needs such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dysgraphia.

If assessment results do not evidence this, it may be appropriate to provide other evidence.

Not all learners with a learning difficulty will need ongoing additional support that warrants continuous additional funding. Some may need minor amendments to how resources are presented (such as the colour of the paper) whereas others may need ongoing additional time and support from OXPEG to achieve certain aims of the programme (and not necessarily just a functional skill).

e) Social support: Learning support may be required for learners who have left school with social issues that mean the adjustment to work requires additional support from the Trainer/Assessor. In most cases information will come via an authoritative source such as the Local Authority, but not in all cases. The Trainer/Assessor will evaluate what support (if any) is required and how this will impact on the delivery and 'cost' to OXPEG. An example of social needs is where the learner has recently left care and is perhaps living independently. The learner may need additional support sessions to stay on track, and OXPEG may need to attend regular meetings with the learner's line manager etc. This fund would not cover the learner's financial difficulties that may come with living independently.



f) Disability (including short term / one off support): Occasionally a learner may require some equipment to support them in completing their Apprenticeship (remember that an Employer will already be supporting them to meet a need through disability whilst in the workplace). The costs of this equipment may mean a short period of additional funding to cover the cost of the equipment. An example may be a specialist keyboard or chair that is needed in the Training Centre. Some disabilities may require ongoing support so the period of funding claimed will be individual to the learner, based on support need and cost to us (OXPEG), the Provider.

4. Justifying and evidencing the application for additional learning support funding:

Funding will be claimed to help with the 'cost' to us as a provider in supporting an individual (over and above a Training Provider's usual support) in terms of staff time and resources. If there is a valid reason to claim the additional funding, staff will adhere to the ESFA Funding Rules for what evidence is needed (see section 2 above).

**The initial assessment, diagnostic and the completion of the Additional Learning Support Plan (and ensuring the period of funding claimed mirrors the support recorded on this document) will secure the additional funding claimed.**

5. Exceptional Learning Support: This is required for learners with significant levels of support who are unlikely to be undertaking training without careful consideration of their needs and ability to meet them, with involvement from other agencies. Where a learner has a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) or Education Health and Care Plan (EHC) the Training Provider will seek further guidance before finalising a decision. If a staff member is unsure whether the 'cost' of identified support can be met through this Learning Support Fund they will contact the Head of Apprenticeships for guidance. Any monetary cost (e.g., equipment costs) will be authorised by Head of Apprenticeships and Senior Manager of Finance as eligible for funding prior to purchase.

Signed:

Date: October 2023