

16-19 Education and Training: Addressing Gaps in Provision

This process applies to provision for the 2012/13 academic year.

This document contains the following:

- Information for local authorities that have identified potential significant gaps in local provision that need to be filled as exceptions to lagged funding;
- The timeline for the process for new provision required to commence in 2012/13;
- A form for recording evidence on gaps and for submission to the YPLA.

Of interest to local authorities and other stakeholders

October 2011

Version 1

Introduction

The YPLA *Statutory Guidance: Funding Arrangements for 16-19 Education and Training* for 2012/13¹ stated that local authorities are responsible for securing local provision which meets the needs of all young people - especially those who would otherwise not be in education, employment or training - and takes into account the needs of employers.

In the vast majority of cases the lagged learner number funding approach will ensure that the needs of learners are met, especially since this approach ensures that providers that deliver additional places in year will be funded for those learners in the following year. The offer of opportunities will evolve and develop to meet the needs of learners and the demands of the economy through the response of schools, Academies, colleges, and other providers.

However, as the Statutory Guidance indicates, there may be a small number of exceptions where lagged numbers and local response is not sufficient to meet learner needs. We have, therefore, put in place for 2012/13, a simple process to help address exceptional gaps whilst the lagged learner number funding approach beds in.

Given the increased levels of funding available in the system for lagged places and the fact that the overall cohort of young people is falling we expect there to be only a very small number of exceptional cases.

Identifying a gap in provision

Local authorities may identify through their own analysis of data provided by us and their own local knowledge that some young people cannot have their needs met through the current provision offer. In some instances, groups of local authorities may work together to submit evidence of a gap, reflecting travel to learn practices.

In the course of reviewing and moderating any submissions we will consider progress towards 100% participation, predicted growth in school cohort numbers and the percentages and numbers in the NEET group. However these are not the sole criteria and all evidence submitted will be considered.

When should the gaps process be used?

This process should only be used when local authorities have been unable to address local gaps through their work with providers to respond to the needs of young people. Additional funding will only be allocated where significant gaps are evidenced and / or where the gap is for specialised, different or distinctive (niche) provision and where the lagged approach cannot be used to respond to needs. Within this framework, the definition of a gap is open for local authorities to interpret in order to support recognisable programmes of study.

Gaps in the 2012/13 academic year

For the 2012/13 academic year funding the Statutory Guidance asks local authorities to notify us by 30th November 2011 if they identify gaps that require new, additional funded learner places.

¹ http://readingroom.ypla.gov.uk/ypla/ypla-statutory_guidance_funding_arrangements_for_16-19_education_and_training-gn-aug11-v1.pdf

The number of places and budget available to allocate to fill gaps in 2012/13 is subject to affordability and will be confirmed as part of the overall 16-19 funding allocation process.

We will make an assessment of the evidence presented and in particular will take into account consistent, national data on cohort growth, NEET rates and volumes and progress towards 100% participation. Surplus capacity and any expected infrastructure changes will also be taken into consideration. Our newly formed territorial teams will assess the evidence submitted and may seek further clarification from local authorities. Following this, all evidence submitted will be reviewed and moderated nationally.

Timeline and Process

- A dedicated e mail box for queries and for returns of submissions will be set up in week commencing 3rd October.
- Local authorities will be able to collate any evidence that they wish to use through October and November. The evidence is not prescriptive but in the local authority's opinion, best supports their case for exceptions to lagged funding.
- We will then determine the number of places and budget available for exceptions to lagged funding after taking account of the lagged learner numbers in providers.
- We expect to reach final decisions on the budget and number of places that are available in January 2012.
- Should there be any local authority areas where additional funds will be made available, we will contact them in February and then determine with them the process for securing the additional provision.
- Any procurement or allocations to provider level will be carried out through February and March, and procurement exercises will be completed by April / May.
- Funding agreements covering both main allocations and any additional numbers secured as a result of the gaps process will be issued by June at the latest.

Allocating the new learner numbers

Should any additional learner numbers be allocated, we will work with the relevant local authorities to confirm the process through which the additional learner numbers will be secured. While it will be open to local authorities to propose how best they think the places could be filled, we are committed to opening up markets and competition. Therefore open and competitive tendering processes will be the normal way of procurement. A formal procurement exercise will also be important because the funding will be to support recognisable programmes of study.

Should places be allocated to new providers, contracts will be issued by the end of June.

New funded learner numbers will be allocated to either existing YPLA/Skills Funding Agency providers or to providers that have completed the YPLA Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) to ensure they meet all requirements for funding. Contracts will specify the provision to be delivered in line with the analysis of the gap provided by the local authority, and that places are for 16 and 17 year olds only.

Ensuring new provision targets the identified gaps

It will be for the local authority to work with the provider to ensure the provision is delivered in line with the specification; we will not monitor the places.

Submitting evidence of a gap

A short form is annexed to this note for local authorities to use to present their evidence, which should be completed and returned to us (via 1213provision@ypla.gov.uk) by 30th November 2011.

Apprenticeships

This process does not apply to Apprenticeships, and the process for identifying the need for additional Apprenticeships places can be found at:

www.apprenticeships.org.uk/LAToolkit.aspx

Annex: Local Authority Evidence of a Significant Gap

Local Authority Name	Learner numbers required	Supporting evidence	Steps previously taken to fill gap by negotiation with providers	For YPLA use

Guidance on completion

Supporting evidence

- state what evidence you have used to identify the need e.g. growth in NEET over the past year, unlikely to reach 100% participation by 2013/15 or projected cohort growth. State how you have quantified the gap.
- state whether the gap is based on a need for new provision to support young people who would otherwise become NEET or to support employer needs, economic growth or community development, a need for different or distinctive (niche) provision or any other reasons.
- any other supporting information, such as closure of local provider, unavailability of courses etc.

Steps previously taken to fill gap by provider negotiation

- set out which providers have been approached and their reasons for being unable to fill the gap.