

Update

Issue 96
22 February 2012

**Skills
Funding
Agency**

Welcome

Welcome to Update, the Agency's weekly round-up of business-critical information and news for colleges, providers and key stakeholders in the further education (FE) learning and skills sector.

Please remember to share Update with your colleagues who might also like to register for [web alerts](#). This will notify them by email each time we communicate a new issue or if we publish any important announcements to the Agency's [website](#). You can also connect with the Agency on [Twitter](#).

We always welcome your feedback so please feel free to contact us by emailing the [Update mailbox](#).

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2011/12 Subcontractor Register Information

Following our commitment to the sector and in line with the intentions of the Government's Transparency Agenda, we are publishing a [list of subcontractors](#) with an aggregate contract value of £100,000 and over, together with details of their lead provider.

The list is compiled from information submitted by lead providers and is a snapshot taken at 10 January 2012.

The Agency collects this information from the sector through the Subcontractor Declaration which is then collated and aggregated into the Subcontractor Register. It is hoped that by

sharing the details of the 2011/12 subcontractor declarations it will provide you with a national picture of the Agency's wider supply chain.

As well as demonstrating the diversity and breadth of the supply chain, the purpose of giving this national overview is to assist lead providers we directly contract with in their due diligence checks. This subcontractor information will enable lead providers to build a better understanding of the capacity of subcontractors, prior to entering into a commercial and legally binding relationship.

Alongside the Subcontractor Register the Agency has developed [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) to support the publication.

The Agency is currently reviewing its position in relation to subcontracting and further information will be available in the revised Funding Requirements due out in early April 2012.

For further information visit the Agency's [website](#).

Note to staff: The list of subcontractors and FAQ document will be published on our website just prior to external distribution of Update tomorrow (Wednesday) afternoon.

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Higher Apprenticeship Fund

Information Action

The Prime Minister recently launched the Higher Apprenticeship Fund round two. Through this fund, the National Apprenticeship Service will target a number of sectors to increase the development and delivery of Higher Apprenticeships across growth sectors in England.

The £6.3m funding announced is part of the £25m programme of targeted support to help employers benefit from Higher Apprenticeships that was first set out in the Government's Plan for Growth last year, and announced as an initiative in July 2011

The invitation to tender was launched on the Skills Funding Agency's [e-tendering portal](#) on Monday, 13 February 2012.

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Revised Funding Confirmation Process

Information

Following the publication of the Skills Investment Strategy, and completion of the funding transition to the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), the Agency has consulted with provider representative bodies and other key partners to develop a simpler, quicker process for confirming post-19 qualifications to open up more of the QCF for public funding. This new process will take effect in February 2012.

An expanded list of QCF qualifications showing the funded offer for 2012/13, with 31 July 2013 as the last date for new starts, will shortly be published on the Agency's website.

Further information will appear in future issues of Update.

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Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16 to 24 year olds Information

The National Apprenticeship Service has published a revised version of the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16 to 24 year olds (AGE 16 to 24) provider fact sheet on the apprenticeships [website](#). This is version three of the document, and was published in February 2012.

Please note, eligibility for the ESF-supported Apprenticeship Grant for Employers is different and is clarified in providers' contracts.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with your usual Agency contact.

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Communicating the Skills Investment Strategy Information

As reported in [Update 92](#), the Agency has published questions and answers from its recent provider regional briefings across the country regarding the Government's [New Challenges, New Chances: The Skills Investment Statement 2011-2014: Investing in a World Class Skills System](#).

As we continue to hold briefings throughout February we will update our website with new questions and answers and we therefore recommend you visit it on a regular basis.

For your convenience we have categorised questions and answers under generic subject headers and we will highlight any new additions clearly.

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FE Choices – Learner Destination Survey Information

The Learner Destination Survey was launched on 2 February 2012 and will run until approximately May 2012. It is aimed at learners who completed their learning in 2009/10.

The survey is being run on behalf of the Agency by the research company GfK NOP.

Individuals, where they are in-scope for the survey and where appropriate permissions have been given, will be contacted directly by GfK NOP so there is no direct involvement with providers. Most of the research will be conducted via telephone interview, with learners being invited to respond to a structured questionnaire.

If you have any questions about the Learner Destination survey, please email the [servicedesk](#).

For general information about FE Public Information please go to the FE Public Information pages of the Agency's [website](#).

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Learner Equality Research – Religion and Belief Information

As noted in [Update 95](#), the Skills Funding Agency has commissioned Babcock Research to undertake research on learners' views of the relationship between religion and/or belief and their experiences in FE. This important piece of work will provide evidence to inform provider good practice in light of the Equality Act.

Babcock are contacting providers this week. We would appreciate providers promoting the [survey](#) amongst learners.

Please contact Research@babcock.co.uk for further information and promotional materials.

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Making skills work for England.

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