

Debate Pack

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Estimates: Spending of the DfE on the National Tutoring Programme and Adult Education

1	Background	2
1.1	The debate	2
1.2	The estimates process	2
1.3	DfE spending in 2021-22	2
1.4	The National Tutoring Programme	3
1.5	Adult education funding	8
2	Parliamentary material	21
2.1	National Tutoring Programme	21
2.2	Adult education	24
3	Press material	32

1 Background

1.1 The debate

On Wednesday 9 March 2022, there will be an Estimates Day Debate on Department for Education spending on the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) and adult education. The topic for the debate was proposed by the Backbench Business Committee, on application from Robert Halfon MP, Chair of the Education Committee.

1.2 The estimates process

The government published its final plans for financial year 2021-22 spending in [HM Treasury's Supplementary Estimates 2021-22](#) on 22 February 2022. These will be put to Parliament for approval following the Estimates Day debates on 9 March 2021.

The spending plans set out in the DfE Supplementary Estimate include several separate spending limits, which Parliament must approve before the final full year's budget can be made available to the department.

Departmental Expenditure Limits (DELs) cover net spending, which is subject to limits set in Spending Reviews, and based on the assumption that the expenditure is within the department's control, whereas Annually Managed Expenditure (AME) cover demand-led spending which is difficult to control and forecast.

- The Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit, or Resource DEL covering DfE's day to day spending, the majority of which comprises grants to fund schools' running costs including staffing;
- The Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit, covering the costs of investment in facilities and infrastructure for schools and other educational institutions;
- Other budget limits, known as Resource and Capital Annually Managed Expenditure, cover costs and repayment of student loans.

1.3 DfE spending in 2021-22

Initial budgets for government departments were published in [HM Treasury's Main Estimates 2021-22](#) in May 2021. The government has now published its

proposals to amend those plans in the 2021-22 Supplementary Estimates, which require the approval of Parliament to come into effect.

The DfE Supplementary Estimate 2021-22 Memorandum shows:

- The Department for Education proposes a decrease to its **RDEL (or day-to-day spending) of £8.12 bn (2.8%) from the Main Estimate**. This would reduce the RDEL budget for 2021-22 from £89.20 billion to £81.08 billion.

The decrease is primarily caused by a £8.42 billion reduction in RDEL from the downwards revaluation of the student loan book, mainly from the changes in the measurement of the fair value of the loans. This is due to the impact of the management charge,¹ as well as an increase in the fair value of the loan book due to discount rate changes.

- DfE proposes a decrease to its **Capital DEL (or investment spending) of £348.4 million (6.2%) from the Main Estimate**. This would reduce the CDEL budget for 2021-22 from £5.61 billion to £5.27 billion.

The decrease in capital DEL primarily stems from a lower-than-anticipated output of capital spending. £139 million of this budget reduction is taken from the Transformation and Capacity funds in further education. There have also been significant cuts to the Grants to Local Authority schools capital budget (£65 million decrease), and the Higher Education Arms-Length-Bodies budget (£60 million decrease).

The Supplementary Estimate proposes that in 2021-22, DfE will spend 72.3% (£58.6 billion) of its RDEL budget on grants to Local Authority and Academy schools. It will spend 12.3% (£10.0 billion) on Higher Education, and 6.9% (£5.6 billion) on Further Education. The remaining 8.5% (£6.9 billion) will be split between Education Skill Funding Agency (£2.7 billion), Early Years (£1.6 billion), Higher Education Arms-Length-Bodies (£1.6 billion), and other running costs (£1 billion).

1.4

The National Tutoring Programme

What is the National Tutoring Programme?

The [National Tutoring Programme](#) (NTP) has three strands – the tuition partners programme, whereby schools use external organisations via a national hub; the academic mentors programme, which is accessed in the same way; and school-led tutoring. The NTP is one of a number of funding streams made available in response to the coronavirus pandemic, with total

¹ This has led to costs being scored through RAME instead of RDEL

Government funding for education recovery now standing at around £4.9 billion.

How is the NTP funded?

The NTP became one of the DfE's Government Major Project Portfolio (GMPP) projects in the fourth quarter of financial year 2020-21. The qualifying criteria for the GMPP is projects over the Treasury Delegated Authority Limit (£50m for DfE) or projects that are significantly repercussive and/or transformational.

The NTP is funded from the DfE's main RDEL budgets.

How much has been spent on the National Tutoring Programme?

It is not clear how much has been spent on the NTP so far. However there have been several funding announcements since June 2020 which can give us an estimate for how much funding has been allocated:

- In June 2020, £350 million was announced for the NTP for 5-16 year olds, as well as the tuition fund for 16-19 year olds, and an oral language intervention programme for reception aged children.
- In February 2021, £185 million was announced for the NTP for 5-16 year olds, and the tuition fund for 16-19 year olds.
- In June 2021 £1 billion was announced for the NTP and the 16-19 tuition fund.²

Cost of School-led tutoring strand

For school-led tutoring (one strand of the NTP), schools automatically receive formulaic allocations based on the number of pupils they have that are eligible for the [Pupil Premium](#) – they do not need to apply for this funding. Any funding allocated which is not used by the end of the academic year will be “recovered by the DfE”.

The formulaic allocations specifically, for the 2021/22 academic year in England:

- State-funded mainstream schools receive £202.50 per pupil for 60% of their pupils that are eligible for pupil premium from year 1 to year 11.

² (June 2020 funding) Department for Education, [Catch-up premium](#), 27 April 2021; (February 2021 funding) Department for Education, [New education recovery package for children and young people](#), 24 February 2021; (June 2021 funding) Department for Education, [Huge expansion of tutoring in next step of education recovery](#), 2 June 2021

- Non-mainstream schools receive a higher per pupil amount (£529 per pupil) but the formula operates the same otherwise.³

These per pupil costs are calculated based on the assumption that the grant will cover 75% of the tuition cost and that each pupil will receive 15 hours of tuition (at a rate of £18 per hour for mainstream pupils and £47 per hour for non-mainstream pupils).

If provision is more expensive than these estimates, then schools are expected to pay for this difference. In addition, the remaining 25% of the tuition cost is expected to be met from other budgets such as the recovery premium or the pupil premium. The Government contribution will decrease from 75% in academic year 2021/22, to 60% in 2022/23, and to 25% in 2023/24.

In financial year [2021-22](#) there were 1.8 million pupils eligible for the deprivation pupil premium in mainstream schools and around 70,000 non-mainstream pupils eligible for the deprivation pupil premium in England.

Based on the [conditions of the school-led tutoring allocations](#) this would imply a rough estimate of the formulaic allocation of around **£240 million in academic year 2021/22** and for schools to contribute around £80 million.

This estimate should be treated with caution because the number of pupils eligible for pupil premium includes pupils in reception to year 11 whereas the NTP does not include reception pupils.

More details about the conditions of grant for school-led tutoring in 2021-22 [can be found on the gov.uk website](#).

Commentary on NTP

Sector representatives and commentators have raised concerns about the rollout and uptake of the NTP, and have questioned whether it's reaching the pupils in most need. The Education Committee is currently conducting an [inquiry into the Government's support for education recovery](#). On 12 January 2022, it heard [evidence from Randstad](#), the company that is currently the delivery partner for the NTP.

In a subsequent article for the online publication, Conservative Home, on 9 February 2022, Committee Chair, Robert Halfon MP, said:

The National Tutoring Programme (NTP), currently contracted to Randstad, has the potential to be one of the great interventions made to date to support young people's recovery from the impact of the pandemic. And yet, despite significant investment, it is falling far short of its targets and it's not going far enough or happening quickly enough.

³ Education and Skills Funding Agency, [School-led tutoring: conditions of grant](#), updated 17 December 2021

[...]

Perhaps most importantly of all, the Department for Education's own annual report, published in December, evidenced that the risk of the catch-up programme failing to recover lost learning is critical or very likely.

The Government must look again at the contract with Randstad and seriously consider enacting the break clause. If Randstad cannot up its game, it is time to say goodbye.⁴

Later in February 2022, press reports suggested that Ministers were considering terminating Randstad's contract.⁵ A PQ answered on 1 March 2022 asked about the Government's plans with regard to the contract. Minister, Robin Walker MP, said:

The delivery and performance of the National Tutoring Programme is monitored closely through ongoing performance reviews, governance boards and senior level meetings.

The department is unable to provide detailed information regarding the contract with Randstad as it is commercially sensitive. We continue to review the delivery of the programme and will set out our future plans in due course.

A full independent evaluation of the programme will be published in summer 2023.⁶

In early March 2022, there were further press reports suggesting that a 65% target for the proportion of tutoring delivered to pupils that qualified for the pupil premium, had been removed. An [article in the journal Schools Week](#) said:

Tutoring providers will no longer have to ensure their catch-up reaches at least two-thirds of poorer pupils after the target was ditched, Schools Week can reveal.

Randstad, the for-profit contractor that runs the government's flagship National Tutoring Programme, said the move would "remove complexities".

The under-fire scheme is way off meeting promises to provide two million tutoring courses this academic year. Just 302,000 courses began last term, figures [released in January](#) showed.

Randstad has now told the NTP's 56 tutor organisations they are "no longer required to ensure that 65 per cent of their tuition support is provided" to children receiving the pupil premium.

⁴ "[Robert Halfon: The Government's education recovery funding has created another North-South divide](#)", Conservative Home [online], 9 February 2022

⁵ "[Firm behind England's flagship tuition scheme faces dismissal after failing to hit targets](#)", the Observer [online], 13 February 2022

⁶ [PQ 128415 \[on the National Tutoring Programme\]](#), 1 March 2022

This followed feedback from school leaders and tutor organisations on how to “remove complexities” and “help schools to access” the scheme, the firm said.

The Department for Education had stipulated the 65 per cent pupil premium requirement, which was also a key performance indicator in its contract with Randstad.

A DfE spokesperson insisted the contractual target remains in place, but tutoring organisations have been given some “operational flexibility”.⁷

In [an Education Policy Institute report on education recovery](#), published in October 2021, EPI described the NTP as “rooted in evidence”, continuing, “implemented effectively, the NTP could be a key component of the levelling up agenda and contribute to reducing long-standing inequities in the system.” However, it identified a number of potential challenges, as well as concern with evidence on take-up at that point, including:

- Considerable regional variation in take-up, with schools in the south and London doing better against their target pupil enrolment, whilst schools in the north west and north east finding it harder to meet enrolment targets.
- Complexities involved in scaling up the scheme, whilst maintaining quality, and adding a third ‘school-led’ strand.
- The extent to which the NTP was reaching disadvantaged pupils.

A survey carried out by the National Association of Head Teachers in summer 2021 found that those surveyed tended to favour school-led tutoring, above tutoring via the NTP.⁸ Subsequently, as noted above, the Government has made direct funding available to schools for school-led tutoring.

Ofsted review of tutoring

The Government has asked education inspectorate for England, Ofsted, to carry out an [independent review of education recovery tutoring](#) in schools and 16-19 providers. The inspectorate is planning to publish a first report in summer 2022, and a further one, the following summer.

⁷ “[National Tutoring Programme target for poorer pupils ditched](#)”, Schools Week [online] 2 March 2022

⁸ National Association of Head Teachers press release, [Tutoring is a top priority for education recovery – but not via the National Tutoring Programme, say school leaders](#), 17 June 2021

1.5

Adult education funding

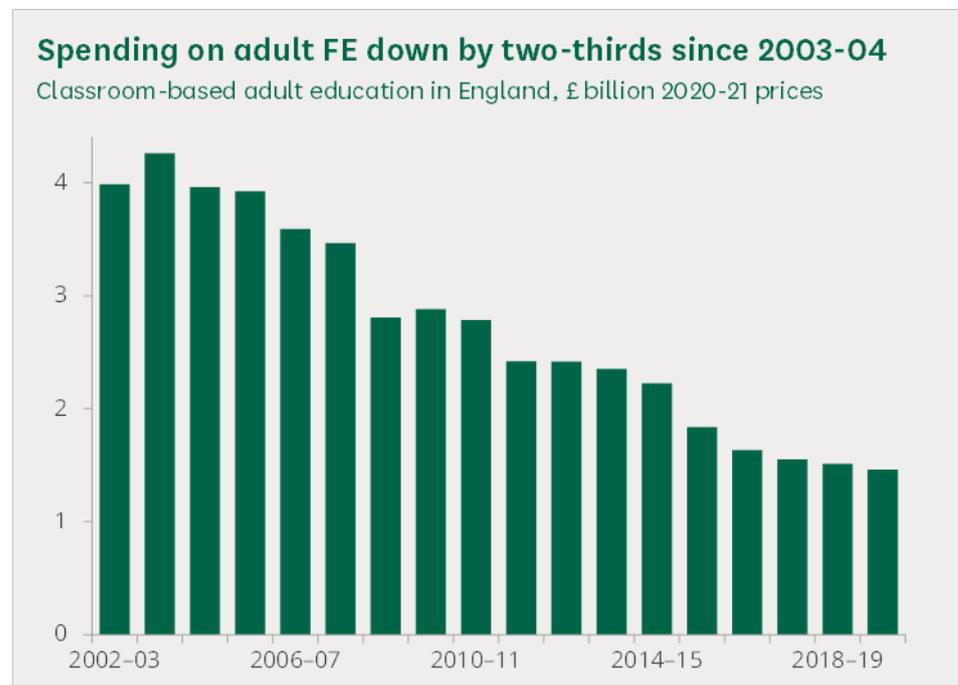
The majority of public funding for non-apprenticeship, adult education (19+) in England is currently provided by the [Education and Skills Funding Agency \(ESFA\)](#) through the [Adult Education Budget \(AEB\)](#).

There are additional streams of funding for adult learning alongside the AEB, including Advanced Learner Loans, and the [National Skills Fund](#), which was announced in 2020 to help adults to train and gain skills to improve their job prospects.

Trends in funding

The Library briefing paper [Adult further education funding in England since 2010](#) gives a detailed description of changes in 19+ funding between 2010 and 2019.

A report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies in 2020, [Annual report on education spending](#) in England, found spending on classroom-based adult education in 2019-20 was nearly two-thirds lower in real terms than in 2003-04, and about 50% lower than in 2009-10. It stood at £4.3 billion in 2003-04 (2020-21 prices) and fell to £2.9 billion in 2009-10 and to just under £1.5 billion in 2019-20. This trend is illustrated below.

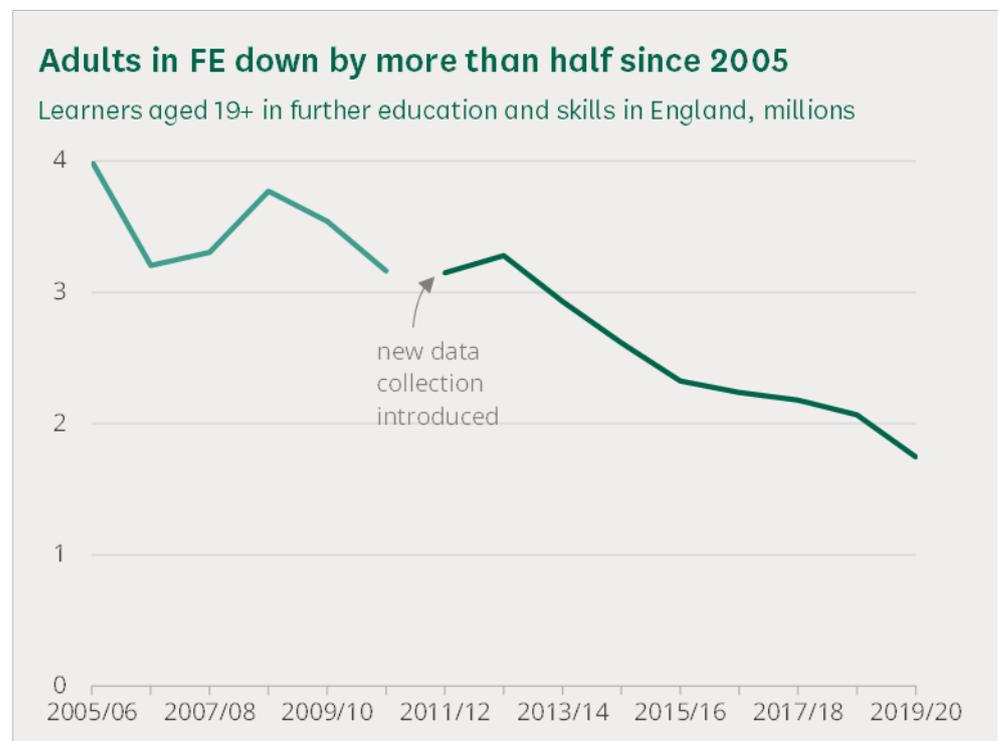


Source: Source: Institute for Fiscal Studies, [2020 Annual report on education spending in England](#), 3 November 2020 – section 4.

This fall in funding was said to be mainly driven by the removal of public funding from some (mainly lower level) courses and a resultant drop in learner numbers.

Trends in the total number of adult learners is shown in the chart below. This includes those on adult apprenticeships and community learning courses. There is a break in this series,⁹ but it is still clear that learner numbers have fallen over time from 4 million in 2005/06 to below 3 million from 2013/14 and below 2 million in the latest figures.

Since 2011/12, the number of learners on classroom-based education and training has fallen by 42%, community learning by 48%, and adult apprenticeships by 5%. The largest fall in numbers by level was in those studying at ‘full level 2’ (equivalent to 5+ GCSEs), where numbers fell by 82% or around 850,000 between 2011/12 and 2019/20.¹⁰



Source: [Further education and skills: November 2020](#), DfE

This large fall in learner numbers means that funding *per student* will not have fallen to the same extent as total funding. The IFS report did not calculate funding per student in adult (19+) further education.¹¹

⁹ This is thought to have reduced counts of learner numbers by around 2%.

¹⁰ When the full range or ‘width’ of course aims a learner is taking are summed they are equivalent to five or more GCSEs.

¹¹ Institute for Fiscal Studies, [2020 Annual report on education spending in England](#), 3 November 2020 – section 4.

The authors of the IFS report said “there has also been a large and deliberate shift from classroom-based to apprenticeship training”. Spending on apprenticeships increased by 50% in real terms between 2009-10 and 2019-20 to a total of £2.0 billion (2020-21 prices). However, *total* spending on classroom-based adult education, apprenticeships and work-based learning still fell by 35% in real terms between 2009-10 and 2019-20.¹²

Recent funding announcements

National Skills Fund

[Budget 2020](#) committed £2.5 billion over the course of the parliament to a new [National Skills Fund](#) to improve adult skills in England. Earlier funding announcements for adult education were summarised in a Parliamentary Question on 10 July 2020, which [highlighted the AEB, National Skills Fund, and planned capital funding](#):

We are continuing to invest in education and skills training for adults through the Adult Education Budget (AEB) (£1.34bn in 2019/20 and 2020/21). We will continue to explore options within adult education and will be making decisions on where we may be able to introduce flexibilities to aid the Post-Covid recovery.

[Budget 2020](#) committed £1.5 billion over five years for capital spending across all of further education in England and a new £2.5 billion National Skills Fund to improve adult skills in England. In June the Government announced that £200 million of the capital funding would be brought forward to 2020-21.¹³

The Chancellor said £375 million from the National Skills Fund would be spent at the [Spending Review in November 2020](#). This included £43 million to expand skills bootcamps and £95 million to support adults in completing a level 3 qualification.

Up to the 2021-22 Supplementary Estimates, there has been no change to the £375 million planned for delivery in 2021-22. The DfE’s overview of the National Skills Fund said: “On top of the £375 million investment in the financial year 2021 to 2022, the government is investing £1.6 billion through the National Skills Fund in the next 3 years.”¹⁴ The total funding currently allocated directly to the fund was therefore £1.975 billion.

An additional £554 million was announced in Spending Review 2021 (see below). The Government has not announced the mechanism through which the £554 million element will be delivered. Including the skills funding announced at the spending review, the National Skills Fund allocated budget is £2.529 billion, of which £375 million is planned for delivery in 2021-22.

¹² Institute for Fiscal Studies, [2020 Annual report on education spending in England](#), 3 November 2020 – section 4.

¹³ [PQ 72243](#) [Skilled Workers: Coronavirus] 10 July 2020.

¹⁴ [National Skills Fund - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The £554 million was announced as part of the National Skills Fund, but also within the Government's £3.8 billion funding package for skills and lifelong learning in the spending review.

Spending Review 2021

The [Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021](#) allocated high-level funding for the period to 2024-25. It included £3.8 billion in new funding for skills and lifelong learning (not just adult education), to be delivered between 2021-22 and 2024-25.¹⁵ This was said to be a 26% real increase compared to 2019-20. Some details of the overall spending for this sector, not just new money, included:

- £1.6 billion across three years to introduce T-levels for 16–19-year-olds. The funding aims to significantly increase the numbers taking T-levels from the current 2000 to 100,000.
- £2.8 billion capital investment across the SR21 period. This funding will establish Institutes of Technology across England and raise the condition of further education colleges in England.
- Apprenticeships funding to reach £2.7 billion by 2024-25.
- £560 million across the SR 21 period for adults across the whole of the UK to develop their numeracy skills through the Multiply programme, funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- £554 million by 2024-25 to substantially increase retraining and upskilling opportunities for adults. According to the Treasury:

This provides a 29% real terms uplift in adult skills funding compared to 2019-20 and meets the government's commitment to a National Skills Fund.

This includes giving more adults access to courses at Level 3 in in-demand areas such as engineering and digital skills, scales up Skills Bootcamps, supports reforms to the adult skills funding system, and invests in specific skills required by local employers.

The Government has not provided details of how much of the £3.8 billion will be delivered in each financial year from 2021-22 to 2024-25.

¹⁵ HM Treasury, [Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021](#), October 2021, pp96-977

The Adult Education Budget (AEB)

The Adult Education Budget (AEB) covers funding for adult education (excluding apprenticeships), community learning, and learner support. It is targeted at groups of learners with low skills, including young adults, unemployed individuals actively seeking work, and employed individuals in receipt of a low wage. It also provides funding for certain subjects, such as English and maths. Eligibility for full funding or co-funding (when the student or their employer must pay part of the costs) is based on an individual's age, their prior educational attainment, and personal circumstances.

Under the Spending Review 2015 settlement, the AEB (comprising the previous non-apprenticeship Adult Skills Budget, plus community learning and discretionary learner support) was set to be held constant in cash terms at £1.5 billion up to 2019-20.

However, the Government subsequently decided that a portion of the AEB would be retained centrally to spend on other Department for Education priorities. As a result, the annual AEB was reduced to £1.34 billion from 2016-17 onwards. The AEB remains at £1.34 billion in 2021/22.

Funding allocation

The budget for adult further education is set by the Government, often in an annual skills funding statement or letter. Funding allocations reflect Government priorities for provision. A guidance document on how the ESFA allocates the AEB is available on the ESFA website, [19+ funding allocations](#). The latest allocations for individual providers (in non-devolved areas) are for [2021/22](#), and allocations from [earlier years](#) are also available online.

Devolution of the AEB

Guidance on how the AEB is distributed in England is available on GOV.UK at [Adult education budget \(AEB\) devolution](#), and discussed in the Library briefing [Devolution of the Adult Education Budget](#), 19 June 2019.

Since August 2019, control over the AEB has been transferred to several mayoral combined authorities (MCAs) and the Greater London Authority (GLA). The current devolved authorities are:

- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
- Greater Manchester
- Liverpool City Region
- Tees Valley
- West Midlands
- West of England

- North of Tyne
- South Yorkshire
- West Yorkshire
- Greater London

The devolved authorities will be responsible for commissioning and funding AEB provision for learners resident in their areas. In exercising their adult education functions, the devolved areas must have regard to [statutory guidance](#) issued by the Secretary of State.

The ESFA remains responsible for funding learners in England that are resident outside of the devolved areas.

Funding allocations for devolved areas are published in separate grant determination letters for each area in [2019/20](#), [2020/21](#) and [2021/22](#).

AEB funding methodology

Further education providers are allocated AEB funding on an annual basis using a nationally consistent methodology. As a general principle, funding is based on historic delivery of provision and aims to ensure that allocations are in line with what providers can realistically earn from the delivery of education and training that is approved for public funding.

Information on the qualifications and learning approved for funding can be found in the ESFA publication, [ESFA funded adult education budget \(AEB\): funding and performance management rules 2021 to 2022](#) version 3, February 2022.

Formula

Individual provider allocations are calculated based on a formula that takes into account the type of courses provided, learner numbers, and the demographics of the provider. Details of the funding formula are set out in the ESFA publication, [ESFA Funded Adult Education Budget Funding Rates and Formula 2021 to 2022](#), January 2021 (pp6-9).

The formula comprises three elements:

- **Rate:** The basis for funding is the rate for the learning aim. The learning aim may be a qualification or other learning activity. Some courses are funded at a higher rate than others. These programme weightings recognise the relative costs of delivering training in different sectors and subjects.
- **Disadvantage uplift:** This provides extra funding to support the most disadvantaged learners, recognising that they are sometimes more costly to recruit and retain.

- **Area cost uplift:** This reflects the higher cost of delivering training provision in some parts of the country, such as London and the South East.

Learner funding legal entitlements

Adult learners may qualify to have their further education course fees paid depending on their immigration and residency status, personal circumstances, and on the course they wish to take. Which courses are funded may also differ between devolved and non-devolved areas.

There is, however, a statutory entitlement to full funding for certain adult learners. The ESFA document [ESFA funded adult education budget \(AEB\) funding and performance management rules 2021 to 2022](#) details the four current legal entitlements for full funding:

ESFA funded AEB includes support for 4 legal entitlements to full funding for eligible adult learners. These entitlements are set out in the [Apprenticeships, Skills and Children Learning Act 2009](#), and enable eligible learners to be fully funded for the following qualifications:

- English and maths, up to and including level 2, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have not previously attained a GCSE grade 4 (C), or higher,
- first full qualification at level 2 for individuals aged 19 to 23,
- first full qualification at level 3 for individuals aged 19 to 23
- Essential digital skills qualifications, up to and including level 1, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have digital skills assessed at below level 1.¹⁶

If an individual meets the legal entitlement eligibility criteria, providers must not charge them any course fees.

Community learning

The community learning budget was combined into the newly created AEB in 2016, following the 2015 Spending Review settlement. In 2017/18, the community learning budget was 18% (£0.24 billion) of the total £1.34 billion AEB.¹⁷

Adult community learning is primarily managed and delivered by local authorities, general further education colleges, and charities. Most community learning provision is at level 2 (equivalent to GCSE level) or below, including non-formal learning which does not lead to accreditation.

¹⁶ ESFA, [ESFA funded adult education budget \(AEB\) funding and performance rules 2021 to 2022](#), p28.

¹⁷ [PQ 216425](#) [Adult Education: Expenditure] 4 February 2019.

It covers a wide range of areas, such as English, maths, digital skills and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) qualifications, as well as learning aimed at developing employability skills and improving well-being, family-oriented programmes, and learning for leisure and enjoyment.

Information on Community Learning provision is set out in a spreadsheet on the ESFA website, [Community learning by type, region, and equality and diversity: participation 2005/6 to 2018/19](#).

National Skills Fund

The Conservative Party [manifesto](#) for the 2019 General Election included a plan for a National Skills Fund (NSF). It was to be worth £2.5 billion over the next parliament in England and provide matching funding for individuals and SMEs for high-quality education and training.¹⁸

Lifetime Skills Guarantee

On 29 September 2020, the Prime Minister [announced a Lifetime Skills Guarantee](#), which is intended to give people the opportunity to train and retrain throughout their lives in order to respond to changing skills needs and employment patterns. The policy currently has two strands financed by the National Skills Fund:

Skills bootcamps

These are free courses of 12 to 16 weeks for adults aged 19 or over and who are either in work or recently unemployed. They are backed by £43 million from the NSF and cover areas including construction, digital, and technical, giving people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer.

Level 3 offer

Since 1 April 2021, adults aged 19 and over who do not have a full [level 3 qualification](#), which is equivalent to an advanced technical certificate or diploma, or A levels, have been able to access [fully-funded courses on an approved list](#). The £95 million is administered either by the ESFA or the Mayoral Combined Authorities and the Greater London Authority depending on whether or not students reside in an area in which the AEB is devolved.

¹⁸ [Get Brexit Done Unleash Britain's Potential. The Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2019.](#)

Funding for the National Skills Fund in England was announced in [Budget 2020](#). The Chancellor then [announced an investment of £375 million](#) at the Spending Review in November 2020. This included:

- **£95 million** for [Free Courses for Jobs](#). This programme funds any adult who does not have a level 3 qualification (A-level or equivalent) or higher to access [over 400 level 3 courses](#). The Minister for Higher and Further Education has [said this offer is a long-term commitment](#).
- **£43 million** to expand [Skills Bootcamps](#). These are courses of up to 16 weeks for adults aged 19 or over developed in partnership with employers, colleges, training providers, and local authorities.
- **£127 million** for measures announced in the [Plan for Jobs](#) (including traineeships, work placements, and the National Careers Service)
- **£110 million** (including £50 million capital) for piloting skills reforms

The Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2021 announced a further £554 million from the National Skills Fund would be invested by 2024-25. This figure will help to expand some of the existing programmes for adult education. The Government said:

This includes giving more adults access to courses at Level 3 in in-demand areas such as engineering and digital skills, scales up Skills Bootcamps, supports reforms to the adult skills funding system, and invests in the skills local employers need.¹⁹

More details of this expenditure and the courses and learners eligible for this funding can be found on the DfE's [overview of the National Skills Fund](#).

Advanced Learner Loans

Advanced Learner Loans (ALLs) were introduced in 2013/14 for learners aged 24 and older on full level 3 and level 4 courses. They were subsequently extended to learners aged 19-23 on full level 3 and level 4 courses and to all learners aged 19 and older on level 5 and 6 courses.

Eligibility

Eligibility for ALLs depends on the learners age, nationality and residency status, previous study history, and on the level of course to be taken. Details

¹⁹ HM Treasury, [Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021](#), October 2021, p97.

of eligibility requirements are set out on the [Student Finance England for practitioners website](#).

Costs and take-up

ALLs only cover the costs of course fees. Repayment terms for these loans are the same as for current higher education undergraduate student loans: Advanced Learner Loans for Access to Higher Education Diplomas are written off if the learner goes on to complete a higher education course. The average loan amount paid per learner was £2,280 in 2019/20.²⁰

The table below gives trends in take-up. Uptake of ALLs has fallen in recent years with fewer loans taken out for level 3 courses. The value of loans awarded fell by 23% in cash terms between academic year 2016/17 and 2019/20.

Advanced learner loan take-up, England						
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
<i>Number of learners with loans</i>						
Level 3	70,700	89,000	110,200	99,500	97,600	86,400
Level 4+	4,800	6,300	9,100	9,900	10,300	9,900
Total	75,400	95,000	119,000	109,000	107,300	95,800
<i>Value of loans awarded (£ million)</i>						
	148.8	195.2	236.2	208.0	200.3	182.4

Source: [Further education and skills: November 2020](#), DfE

To put these figures in context more than 1 million home higher education students took out student loans in 2019/20 with a total value of almost £17 billion.²¹

The Government forecasts that the value of ALLs will increase modestly from £202 million in (financial year) 2019-20 to £210 million in 2023-24. Only 25% of learners who take out these loans are expected to repay them in full. The Government forecasts that the costs of these loans to the public sector (the so-called 'RAB charge') is 69% of their face value. In other words, the present value of loan repayments is expected to be 31% of the amount taken out.²² These estimates are subject to considerable uncertainty, especially at present with the economic downturn due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Capital funding

Capital funding is allocated to further education providers to repair, upgrade, or expand buildings, facilities, and equipment.

²⁰ Student Loans Company, [Advanced Learner Loans paid in England, Academic Year 2019/20](#).

²¹ [Student Support for Higher Education in England 2020](#), SLC

²² [Student loan forecasts, England: 2019 to 2020](#), DfE

The [Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021](#) said capital investment across the further education sector would be £2.8 billion between 2022-23 and 2024-25. This is total funding and will include some of the £1.5 billion figure announced at Budget 2020.²³

More detail on capital funding is available in the Library briefing [Further Education Funding in England](#).

Skills and Post-16 Education Bill

Skills for Jobs White Paper proposals

In January 2021, the Government published a White Paper, [Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth](#), which contained proposals for reforming the further education sector, simplifying funding streams, and potentially moving to a multi-year funding regime. The White Paper said:

We will reform our funding and accountability systems to better support providers in their role, simplifying funding streams and giving providers more autonomy, but holding them to account for the outcomes they deliver. We will develop proposals for consultation in spring 2021 which will set out how we will:

- Simplify and streamline funding for further education to support high-value provision relevant to the labour market.
- Give more certainty to providers over their funding, including considering how we could move to a multi-year funding regime which is more forward-looking.
- Reform our accountability approach, relaxing ringfences and reporting; instead focusing on the outcomes that colleges are delivering to improve progression and respond to employer demand.
- Introduce new accountability structures to underpin delivery of Local Skills Improvement Plans.²⁴

The White Paper is discussed in more detail in the Library briefing [FE white paper: Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth](#), 28 January 2021.

IFS analysis of the White Paper proposals

A report by the IFS analysing the Government's adult education proposals [asserted that many key details about the proposals were missing or left to further consultation](#), particularly with regard to what the National Skills Fund would mean in practice.²⁵

²³ HM Treasury, [Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021](#), October 2021, pp 96-97.

²⁴ DfE, [Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth](#), January 2021, p48.

²⁵ IFS, [Big changes ahead for adult education funding? Definitely maybe](#), April 2021, p16.

The IFS also noted that the £2.5 billion spending commitment over the next five years would only reverse about one-third of the cuts to adult education spending over the 2010s.

The report supported the case for reforming the current funding system, which it argued is overly-complex, too focused on the short term, and provides perverse incentives to increase numbers. However, it again noted a lack of detail and firm commitments in the White Paper.²⁶

The Bill

Many of the white paper proposals were included in the [Skills and Post-16 Education Bill](#), which was introduced in the House of Lords on 18 May 2021 and had its first reading in the House of Commons on 26 October 2021.

The Bill is discussed in two Library briefing papers:

- [Skills and Post-16 Education Bill \[Bill No 176 of 2021-22\] HL](#)
- [Skills and Post-16 Education Bill \[HL\]: Progress of the Bill](#)

Lifelong Loan Entitlement

On 29 September 2020, the Prime Minister gave a speech at Exeter College in which he [announced a new Lifetime Skills Guarantee](#) and plans for a flexible Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE). Such a policy was recommended by the Augar report and endorsed by a House of Lords report, which recommended “funding for modules or credit where a full degree is not required.”²⁷

The policy was included in the Skills for Jobs White Paper, which stated individuals would be entitled to the equivalent of four years’ worth of post-18 education to use over their lifetime.”²⁸ The White Paper said the Government would consult on the scope and detail of the entitlement in early 2021.²⁹

No consultation took place, but Part 1 Chapter 3 of the Bill made provision for the introduction of the LLE. The Bill’s clauses would amend the regulation-making powers of the Secretary of State to allow student finance to be provided for modules of higher education and further education courses. It would also allow the Secretary of State to prescribe an overall maximum amount of funding that learners could access and specify time periods for such loans.

²⁶ IFS, [Big changes ahead for adult education funding? Definitely maybe](#), April 2021, p2.

²⁷ House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee, [Treating students fairly: The economics of post-school education](#), 2018.

²⁸ DfE, [Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth](#), January 2021, p40.

²⁹ DfE, [Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth](#), January 2021, p41.

Consultation

On 24 February 2022, the Government [launched a consultation on the lifelong loan entitlement](#) as part of its conclusion to the post-18 education and funding review.³⁰

The consultation document says the LLE will be facilitated through “lifelong learning accounts”:

To give the power of informed choice to the learner, new students will be able to sign up and log in online to find a lifelong loan entitlement worth the equivalent of four years of post-18 education to be used across level 4-6 education as they choose. Like a bank account, their account will show their learning “balance”. Through their account, learners will be able to receive clear signposting of the courses and modules they can get onto to propel themselves into learning and further their career aspirations.³¹

The consultation will focus on the design principles of the LLE and how the current system will need to change. It has three themes:

- Ambition of the LLE
- Scope of the LLE
- Supporting quality provision and flexible learning.³²

The Government said following the outcome of the consultation, it would continue to engage closely on the implementation of the LLE in the run up to its introduction from 2025.

³⁰ DfE, [Lifelong loan entitlement consultation](#), 24 February 2022.

³¹ DfE, [Lifelong loan entitlement consultation](#), 24 February 2022, p8.

³² DfE, [Lifelong loan entitlement consultation](#), 24 February 2022, p6.

2 Parliamentary material

2.1 National Tutoring Programme

Debates

[National Tutoring Programme](#)

24 February 2022 | House of Lords | House of Lords Chamber | 819 cc339-342

[Government's Education Catch-up and Mental Health Recovery Programmes](#)

3 February 2022 | House of Commons | House of Commons Chamber | 708 cc517-540

[Coronavirus: Education Setting Attendance and Support for Pupils](#)

23 September 2021 | House of Commons | House of Commons Chamber | 708 cc425-434

Parliamentary questions

[National Tutoring Programme: Finance](#)

3 March 2022 | 129147

Asked by: Kate Hollern

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has for the allocation of funding resulting from the forecast underspend for the National Tutoring Programme.

Answered by: Mr Robin Walker | Department for Education

The department will continue to support the progress of tutoring through the three flexible routes to high-quality tutoring (school-led tutoring, tuition partners and academic mentors) and will consider in-year adjustments to ensure schools continue offering the type of tutoring that best suits their pupils to maximise the benefits of the programme.

[National Tutoring Programme](#)

2 March 2022 | 127384

Asked by: Bridget Phillipson

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 21 February 2022 to Question 121732, on National Tutoring programme, whether

he has encountered practical barriers to publishing regional data on the operational aspects of participation in the National Tutoring programme.

Answered by: Mr Robin Walker | Department for Education

The National Tutoring Programme is due to reach hundreds of thousands more pupils this year, as part of a significant expansion to give schools more flexibility to deliver tutoring that works for them, and ensure no child is left behind. The department is continuing to review the practicalities of publishing regional data.

[National Tutoring Programme](#)

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[National Tutoring Programme](#)

1 March 2022 | 129236

Asked by: Stephen Morgan

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of National Tutoring Programme sessions have been cancelled with less than 24 hours' notice this academic year in the tuition partnership pillar.

Answered by: Mr Robin Walker | Department for Education

The department has published participation figures for the first term of this academic year which estimates that just over 300,000 tuition courses had been started since September. The department will be releasing more information about the programme in future.

[National Tutoring Programme](#)

1 March 2022 | 128415

Asked by: Stephen Morgan

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Government's contract with Randstad for the National Tutoring Programme, whether his Department has requested a termination estimate.

Answered by: Mr Robin Walker | Department for Education

The delivery and performance of the National Tutoring Programme is monitored closely through ongoing performance reviews, governance boards and senior level meetings.

The department is unable to provide detailed information regarding the contract with Randstad as it is commercially sensitive. We continue to review the delivery of the programme and will set out our future plans in due course.

A full independent evaluation of the programme will be published in summer 2023.

(related PQs: [128414](#); [128413](#); [128412](#); [128251](#) and others)

National Tutoring Programme

21 February 2022 | 121732

Asked by: Bridget Philippon

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the National Tutoring Programme contract with Randstad, whether the current breakdown of tutoring packages reflects the minimum requirements in the contract for tutoring packages to be delivered as set out, that is (a) South East five per cent; (b) London eight per cent; (c) North West seven per cent; (d) East of England four per cent; (e) West Midlands six per cent; (f) South West three per cent; (g) Yorkshire & the Humber five per cent; (h) East Midlands four per cent and (i) North East 3 per cent.

Answered by: Mr Robin Walker | Department for Education

The department will continue to monitor and take targeted action in areas with low levels of tutoring. A second application round for tutoring organisations in November was designed to increase capacity in these areas. These organisations are now in post and active, focused on increasing capacity and delivery in these areas from January 2022. For example, in the North East there were previously three accredited tutoring organisations, this has increased to nine, making tutoring far more accessible to schools and increasing capacity. Randstad has bespoke communication plans for each region, the department continues to refine these with Randstad so that all useful channels, including local press, are fully engaged.

National participation data has been published for the first term of this year; the department has committed to publish participation data on a regular

basis to explain the programme's progress. Regional delivery is reviewed regularly for operational purposes and to ensure supply is available where it is needed, and the department is considering the practicalities of publishing regional data.

2.2 Adult education

Debates

[Skills and Post 16 Education Bill, report stage and third reading](#)

21 February 2022 | House of Commons | House of Commons Chamber | 709, cc79-144

[Skills and Post 16 Education Bill, second reading](#)

15 November 2021 | House of Commons | House of Commons Chamber | 703, cc380-424

[Adult skills and lifelong learning](#)

15 April 2021 | House of Commons | Westminster Hall | 692, cc101WH-124WH

Parliamentary questions

[Adult education: Finance](#)

2 March 2022 | 129819

Asked by: Colleen Fletcher

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the adequacy of the funding available for adult education courses within (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England in each of the last three years.

Answered by: Alex Burghart | Department for Education

We are continuing to invest in adult education for adults aged 19 and over through the adult education budget (AEB) (£1.34 billion in each of the 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 academic years). The AEB fully funds or co-funds skills provision for eligible adults aged 19 and above from pre-entry to level 3, to support adults to gain the skills they need for work, an apprenticeship or further learning.

Since the start of the 2019/20 academic year a proportion of the AEB has been devolved to a number of Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCA) including the West Midlands combined authority of which Coventry is a part, and the

Greater London Authority (GLA) (approximately 50% of the budget was devolved in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years and 60% in the 2021/22 academic year). The MCAs/GLA are responsible for the provision of AEB-funded adult education for their residents and allocation of the AEB to providers.

The AEB academic year allocations for the West Midlands are as follows:

2019/20 academic year	£125.6 million
2020/21 academic year	£135.9 million
2021/22 academic year	£131.7 million

Lifelong Education: Finance

10 February 2022 | 117906

Asked by: Kate Osborne

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Lifelong Loan Entitlement, for what reason a student studying a module at level 4 in higher education will be eligible for maintenance support, but an adult wishing to do a full level 3 qualification does not qualify for that support.

Answered by: Alex Burghart | Department for Education

The Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE) will provide individuals with a loan entitlement to the equivalent of four years of post-18 education to use over their lifetime. It will be available for both modules and full years of study at higher technical and degree levels (levels 4 to 6), regardless of whether they are provided in colleges or universities.

We want to drive a transformative impact on post-18 study, delivering greater parity between further education (FE) and higher education (HE). Under this flexible skills system, people will be able to space out their studies and learn at a pace that is right for them, including choosing to build up their qualifications over time, within both FE and HE providers.

The Skills and post-16 Education Bill modifies my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education's existing powers to set the levels of loan available to support more modular provision, which could extend across both tuition fee and maintenance support. The LLE is also intended to fund whole courses, or their component modules if taken separately, that meet the necessary regulatory requirements and are provided by or on behalf of a registered provider. We are considering what maintenance loans and student support grants would be available for any study funded through the LLE, as well as how to best support modular study. We will consult on the detail and

scope of this in due course. The LLE does not extend to level 3 provision, which is already funded through a number of other funding streams.

The Adult Education Budget (AEB) fully funds or co-funds skills provision for eligible adults aged 19 and above from pre-entry to level 3, to support adults to gain the skills they need for work, an apprenticeship or further learning. This includes a statutory entitlement to full funding for adult learners aged 19-23 undertaking their first full qualification at level 3.

Since 1 April 2021, the National Skills Fund has been supporting any adult who does not have A level equivalent or higher qualifications, to access over 400 fully funded level 3 courses, with Free Courses for Jobs. This offer is a long-term commitment, backed by £95 million from the National Skills Fund in year one. From April, any adult in England earning under the national living wage annually (£18,525) or unemployed, will also be able to access the Free Courses for Jobs offer for free, regardless of their prior qualification level.

Living costs support is not offered to those undertaking level 3 qualifications. General support for those costs is provided for by the Department for Work and Pensions. Through grant funding and a bursary fund for those with an advanced learner loan, colleges and other training providers are able to help adult learners overcome barriers which prevent them from taking part or continuing in learning. This includes:

- Learner support to support learners in financial hardship. Providers have discretion to help learners meet course related costs such as transport, accommodation, books, equipment and childcare.
- Learning support to meet the additional needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Adult Education: Finance

13 January 2022 | 100489

Asked by: Mr Toby Perkins

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the financial effect of the adult education clawback for the academic year 2021- 22 on affected further education colleges.

Answered by: Alex Burghart

We monitor college financial health on a regular basis and use this information to determine where support and intervention from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and Further Education Commissioner can help colleges to improve their position.

Where colleges are at risk of running out of cash, emergency funding is considered on a case-by-case basis and based on a thorough assessment of each college's circumstances and the minimum funding needed to minimise disruption to learners.

The financial impact on further education (FE) colleges who did not meet the Adult Education Budget (AEB) Reconciliation threshold for 2020 to 2021 funding year was assessed using information in the College Financial Forecasting Return (CFFR) submitted to the ESFA in July 2021. In addition, eligible FE colleges were able to submit an AEB Reconciliation business case with an updated CFFR or additional financial information, where clawback of funds meant this had a material financial impact on their cashflow in 2021-22 financial year.

Adult Education: Finance

5 January 2022 | 92877

Asked by: Mr Toby Perkins

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reason there has been a delay in confirming the outcomes of appeals against the adult education budget clawback.

Answered by: Alex Burghart

A comprehensive review of each business case received was undertaken to ensure that our decisions were correct. We originally committed to confirming outcomes to eligible providers by 15 November 2021. There was a short delay, until 24 November 2021 whilst those outcomes were finalised and agreed.

Adult Education: Finance

8 December 2021 | 86554

Asked by: Mr Toby Perkins

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many further education colleges (a) appealed against the clawback of adult education funds and (b) were successful in their appeal against the clawback of adult education funds.

Answered by: Alex Burghart

The department received 78 adult education business cases from eligible Education and Skills Funding Agency grant funded providers, of which 58 were further education colleges. In total, 65 business cases were supported, of which 48 were further education colleges.

Adult Education: Finance

22 October 2021 | 58472

Asked by: Mr Toby Perkins

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much Government funding has been allocated to adult education in each region in each year since 2019.

Answered by: Will Quince

The government supports adult education, outside of apprenticeships, through the Adult Education Budget (AEB), National Skills Fund, European Social Fund (ESF) and Advanced Learner Loans.

A complete regional breakdown of funding allocations across these funding streams is not available. However, the government does publish the following online at GOV.UK:

- The amount of AEB devolved to Mayoral Combined Authorities and the Greater London Authority, figures are available from 2019-20 onwards.
- Figures for 2019-20:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-education-budget-s31-grant-determination-letters>(opens in a new tab).
- Figures for 2020-21 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-education-budget-s31-grant-determination-letters-2020-to-2021>(opens in a new tab)
- Figures for 2021-22 are available here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-education-budget-devolved-grant-determination-letters-2021>(opens in a new tab). This includes ring fenced budgets for the adult level 3 offer.

The amount of AEB allocated by the Education and Skills Funding Agency to providers is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/19-funding-allocations#supporting-documents>(opens in a new tab) and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/funding-allocations-to-training-providers-2021-to-2022>(opens in a new tab).

The figures from 2019/20 onwards, following AEB devolution, are in respect of funding allocated to providers for learners resident in non-devolved areas.

Starting this year, the government is investing £2.5 billion in the National Skills Fund. This is a new investment, which includes £375 million in the financial year 2021-22, exclusive of Barnett. This is broken down as follows:

- £138 million to deliver on my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister's skills speech (£95 million for Free Courses for Jobs offer and £43 million for Skills Bootcamps)

- £127 million for measures announced in the Plan for Jobs (including apprenticeships, traineeships, and Sector-based Work Academy Programmes)
- £110 million (including £50 million capital) for piloting skills reforms

ESF contract values from 2014 to 2020, covering rounds one and two, for contracts starting in 2016 and 2019 respectively, are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esf-2014-to-2020-programme-list-of-contracts>(opens in a new tab).

The Department forecasts demand for Advanced Learner Loans with HM Treasury annually. These tuition fee loans are for provision across England in all areas. The total value of loans approved by the Student Loans Company in the 2021/20 academic year was £182.4 million.

The Department also publishes adult learner data, which includes a breakdown of how many learners are supported by region: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/further-education-and-skills>(opens in a new tab).

Lifelong Education

14 September 2021 | 43667

Asked by: Stuart Anderson

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to support the delivery of (a) adult education and (b) other lifelong learning programs.

Answered by: Gillian Keegan

We are continuing to invest in education and skills training for adults through the Adult Education Budget (AEB) (£1.34 billion in 2021/22). The AEB fully funds or co-funds skills provision for eligible adults aged 19 and above from pre-entry to level 3, to support adults to gain the skills they need for work, an apprenticeship or further learning.

Starting this year, the government is investing £2.5 billion in the National Skills Fund in England.

Since 1 April this year, the government is supporting any adult who does not have A-level equivalent or higher qualifications, to access over 400 fully funded level 3 courses, with Free Courses for Jobs. This offer is a long-term commitment, backed by £95 million from the National Skills Fund in year one.

Complementing this support for adults, Skills Bootcamps offer free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, giving people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer. We are now expanding the Skills Bootcamp programme across the country during the 2021-22 financial year, with £43 million from the National Skills Fund.

As part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee, from 2025 we will introduce a Lifelong Loan Entitlement equivalent to four years of post-18 education. People will be supported to study throughout their life, with the opportunity to train, retrain and upskill as needed in response to changing skills needs and employment patterns. It will help transform post-18 study, delivering greater parity between further and higher education.

3

Press material

[Focus on poorer pupils removed as National Tutoring Programme target](#)

Evening Standard

3 March 2022

[More questions than answers on the Lifelong Loan Entitlement](#)

Wonkhe

24 February 2022

['Failing on all measures' – how the Government's flagship National Tutoring Programme ran into trouble](#)

I News

12 February 2022

[Robert Halfon: The Government's education recovery funding has created another North-South divide](#)

Conservative Home

9 February 2022

[Flagship tutor scheme 'scandalously' short of targets – with just 8% of mentoring provided](#)

Schools Week

11 January 2022

[Relief as most AEB business cases are successful](#)

FE Week

7 January 2022

[Three critical questions the National Skills Fund consultation should have asked](#)

FE Week

7 November 2021

[What the 2021 Spending Review means for colleges](#)

Association of Colleges

3 November 2021

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