

## **Briefing Note for B&FC Apprentices**

As part of the cross-government efforts to respond to the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19), the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) is implementing new measures, until further notice, to make it easier for apprenticeships to continue and complete in a different way if they need to, or to break and resume an apprenticeship later when that becomes possible.

The ESFA have published detailed guidance that B&FC have been summarised for you in this document, but you can read the full document [HERE](#).

ESFA advise that this guidance will be kept under active review and updated regularly as further developments occur. We will update our document when this happens.

We hope that the frequently asked questions, and the responses, are helpful to you. However, please do not hesitate to contact your Skills Coach/Designated Tutor with any queries. Our key focus at B&FC is to continue to work closely with you and to enable you to successfully complete your apprenticeship

If you are struggling to contact your Skills Coach/Designated Tutor then please contact the Apprenticeship Delivery Managers:

**Pamela Ashworth** on 07834177103 or **Gillian Sloane** on 07793242363

### **1. What will happen from September to my apprenticeship?**

We will be operating a mix of on and off site learning which will cover everything that you need to achieve your standard or framework. Apprentices will continue to engage in some digital or distance learning, teaching, coaching or assesment at a convenient time within their agreed working hours. B&FC is a COVID-19 secure employer and apprentices will be able to attend our site, as required, as part of their programme of delivery from September 2020. This is likely to be for practical skills demonstration, development or assessment. We will also be undertaking activity on employer's premises, as agreed and appropriate.

### **2. If I need to self-isolate, what will happen to my apprenticeship?**

Apprenticeships have been designed to be responsive to changes in apprentices' circumstances, for example during a period of illness. If you need to self-isolate, please talk to your employer and your contact at B&FC about the best way to continue with your apprenticeship.

As long as you feel well enough then delivery can continue through online learning. If you are too ill to undertake any learning then other options could include the following:

- A short pause of less than 4 weeks. This will not affect the planned end-date of your apprenticeship.
- A formal break in learning of 4 weeks or more. This will result in the planned end-date of your apprenticeship being re-planned.
- Re-scheduling the planned assessment activity for a later date.

**3. I need to take care of myself/a family member. Can I continue my apprenticeship learning at home?**

Yes, this will usually be possible. Please discuss this with your Skills Coach or Designated Tutor.

**4. Why should I continue my learning if I can't attend my place of work?**

B&FC do not want the disruption caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak to prevent apprentices continuing to learn where this is still possible. Not being able to apply the learning straight away might present some challenges, but there are benefits from carrying on with the apprenticeship during this time, including continued engagement and progression that can all be applied to the job once it is safe and practical to do so.

**5. My employer is enforcing a 'work from home' policy. What are my options?**

B&FC is providing digital and distance learning alternatives. We will work with you and your employer to enable you to progress with your apprenticeship wherever possible.

**6. My employer is asking me to take a period of leave, or I have been told I will be "furloughed" under the job retention scheme. What happens to my apprenticeship during that time?**

At B&FC, in most cases, we will be able to continue to work with you. Where apprentices are furloughed, they can continue to train for their apprenticeship, as long as it does not provide services to or generate revenue for their employer.

Please discuss how this will work for you with your Skills Coach or Designated Tutor.

**7. Will I be paid for continuing my learning if I have been furloughed?**

Yes. While furloughed you will still be paid by your employer and pay taxes from your income. While you cannot undertake work for your employer while on furlough you can undertake training. Where training has been required by your employer you should be paid the appropriate minimum wage for the time spent training. This will be covered as part of your furlough payment in the first instance.

Your time spent training must be paid at the appropriate minimum wage. Where the total furlough payment amount equates to less than the appropriate minimum wage for the total amount of your time spent training, during the furlough period, your employer should top up your furlough payment.

**8. What happens to me during a period of unpaid leave in terms of monies? Do I have access to Universal Credit?**

Universal Credit may be available as long as you meet the conditions of entitlement. Apprentices on unpaid leave may also [be eligible for other benefits](#).

**9. How do I record progress towards my apprenticeship while I am subject to different working conditions, like working from home?**

You will already be recording your off-the-job training activity using OneFile. Please continue to use this in the coming weeks. If your work circumstances change because of COVID-19, so that the delivery requirements can no longer be met, then we will discuss with you if a break in learning would be best.

**10. My employer is laying me off/making me redundant. What happens to my apprenticeship?**

Please speak to your Skills Coach or Designated Tutor at B&FC as soon as you can if you are furloughed (through the job retention scheme) or made redundant. We will work with you to enable your apprenticeship training continue whenever possible

**11. If I can't work/attend training, will I still be paid?**

An apprenticeship is a job with training, so even when you are not able to do your training, you are still employed. You will be paid in line with the details in your employment contract.

Where you are unable to work, you need to speak to your employer about their policies on pay. The government is providing a range of support to employers to help them retain and pay the wages of employees (including apprentices) during the coming months.

If your employer is not aware of the support for them this can be accessed [HERE](#)

**12. I am on a fixed-term contract, which would ordinarily have provided enough time for me to complete the training and the end-point assessment. If the training is delayed, and I have not completed my EPA before I leave employment, can I do the end-point assessment afterwards?**

Please speak to your Skills Coach or Designated Tutor at B&FC.

We will work with you and your employer to reschedule the end-point assessment wherever we can, which may also include reviewing your apprenticeship agreement and commitment statement.

**13. What will happen if I am not well enough to take my end-point assessment?** If you are unwell, or in a period of self-isolation, and unable to attend your end-point assessment, please contact your Skills Coach or Designated Tutor at B&FC as soon as you are able. This will allow us the maximum time to re-schedule your assessment.

**14. I am due to take my end-point assessment (EPA) soon. Will I still be able to do this?**

In many cases, modification of end-point assessment arrangements, including remote assessments wherever practicable and possible, will replace the planned EPA. This is in order to support you to maintain progress and achievement of your programme.

Where this is currently not possible, we will continue to work with the awarding bodies to find a solution for you. If you are ready for assessment, but cannot be assessed due to COVID-19 issues, we will make sure your end-point assessment is rescheduled. If you are ready to go through gateway and this has been delayed, we will ensure that you can have an extension to

the assessment time frame. Your Skills Coach or Designated Tutor will discuss with you how your assessment arrangements will work.

### **Further Information**

If you want to understand the detailed position on assessment you can find out more [HERE](#)

You can also access B&FC's Frequently Asked Questions for all students [HERE](#)

If you want more information on wellbeing services that B&FC provides, or can signpost you to, you can access that [HERE](#)

If you want more information on staying safe at work check the [workplace safety guidance](#) to find out what you can do to help keep your workplace safe and what you should expect from your employer.

You can also take a look at the [safer travel guidance](#) published by the department for transport to find out how to stay safe on your commute.

You can also read the apprenticeship service [guidance for apprentices affected by redundancy](#)

All the government guidance on COVID-19 can be accessed HERE <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Specific links relevant to apprentices can be found on the government website here

<https://help.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/hc/en-gb/sections/360003798540-Apprentice>