

## **FE & Skills - Return to Work**

Some WYLP members have, very kindly, shared their preparations & ideas for returning to work or opening centres / campuses. This information has been collated to help support other training organisations with their planning.

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### **Summary of Responses –**

The vast majority of providers will continue with online learning for the summer period, with reviews and curriculum developments taking place ready for a September to December roll out. Theory sessions will continue to be provided online for most apprentices, and almost all providers will continue with a blended model of delivery as part of their future pedagogical approaches with learners. Some of the more practical sectors are starting to pilot and stagger learners from Mid-June, particularly those in their first year of the apprenticeship. Learners on Adult Education programmes & traineeships have a slightly more mixed response, with some remaining online and some opening their centres from July 2020 for face to face delivery.

### **Responses from Providers**

Initial response is that it is just too early to say, lots still on furlough and those that aren't are busy with higher workload.

Majority of learners are still on furlough and engaging virtually, no plans in place yet for accessing learners in the workplace – we do not yet know our companies social distancing rules so foresee working from home until at least September.

Plans are being made for careful phasing of the provision and timetabling, safe travel to and from the sessions, between and within sites, PPE (as required), handwashing and cleaning, catering and any other support staff and students will need. Trade unions are participating in this planning.

The college will prioritise student access to the campuses including:

1. Continuation of the provision for our most vulnerable students at their previous home site (which has been running at Park Lane for several weeks now);
2. Those students and apprentices who would have achieved by July 2020 and cannot complete the remainder of their assessments remotely, or by the teacher estimation of grades. This would include completing students who require this assessment to gain a 'licence to practice' or to attain accreditation for progression and apprentices who require assessment at college or in the employer premises (at the employer's and the college's discretion);
3. Transition activity for those students who are returning next year and for whom the delivery of this activity cannot be achieved remotely.

Smaller numbers will commence provision initially, with this gradually increasing as the safety situation is monitored and the national picture around Covid infection rates, testing, tracing, and tracking becomes clearer.

We are still working from home at the moment and continue to engage learners remotely. We are following government guidelines so whilst their request is work from home, we will continue to do so and remote delivery will be our main focus for learners.

Remote learning is working for the vast majority of our learners who are all making excellent progress. We are still getting learners to EPA on time and remote assessments so far have gained distinctions, so we are not in a rush to open the centre.

The remote learning engagement has been good overall with apprenticeships and trainees still expected to login at 8:30am in uniform – this will continue to at least September.

Main issue is when we invite learners back into centre they will have to travel on public transport, work their way across town. We are planning on opening periodically for any assessments or support for individuals that do need it and this is planned for 22 June. We will continue with remote interviews for new applicants which is working well and remote sign ups.

We are hopeful that will be open in the near future, but we have found that our online/ remote delivery is working better than forecasted. Our plans to return are set out by our Governing group, who have invested in masks and are in the process of distributing to all staff even if they are not currently client facing.

July 1st is our planned date to recommence training, with a phased return of furloughed staff expected over the following few months. Pleased to hear the chancellor bring forward the part time working furlough exemption to July 1st, & we expect to use it.

Risk assessment are being completed on all sites to ensure they are safe and can reopen to learners and staff. No apprenticeship delivery on employer sites has taken place yet, we are planning for this to be staggered based on the risk assessment & H&S checks of the employers and what we decide to hold copies of. We are planning for Business Services provision to commence back for workplace visits from August, but for HSC provision this will likely be October.

We are developing a video to send out to our learners, parents, employers on our approaches to opening centres, to reassure and show the changes, social distancing rules and how to get around the site. We are utilising the Gov certificate to show we are ready and have responded to their expected rules.

We have completed a risk assessment for all our properties and have removed computer stations and desks to ensure learners who would like to return and feel safe to do so are 2 metres apart. We have installed hand sanitisers at the entrance & at reception areas. All staff desks have hand gel, antibacterial wipes and a box of tissues. All learner desks will have the same on.

Apprenticeships seem to be going well remotely & engagement is good but will need to see what the impact is from breaks in learning and furlough over the summer and will review the situation again in September.

Our learners are all work based, with very few of them coming into the centre. However, we have started seeing this week companies allowing us to get back on site and seeing the learners in a COVID-19 safe way.

We will be seeking to open the college to a limit number of learners in some selected areas where it would be beneficial to the learner to undertake face to face learning primarily targeting 16-19, both FE and Apprenticeships.

### **Engineering, Construction Providers**

Running pilot sessions to begin with, for those who need their last element of practical to end the year. Majority will remain online with theory lessons. Next phase won't kick in until social distancing is relaxed.

Trialling delivery to very small groups from w/c 15 June 2020 with a view to expanding provision where possible. Working on making the site COVID-19 Secure for both learners and clients.

All our centres look like the isle at B&Q with tape and cones everywhere. Very strict social distancing guidelines, with a much-reduced number of delegates permitted per course. L3 Apprentices will be

returning to our centres from June 15<sup>th</sup>. But instead of 5 days a week, they will only be in for two, allowing group numbers to be halved. Their BTEC will continue to be virtual. Our HNC and HND has gone 'virtual'. This will be the case from September and so on.

Phase 1 plan return starting 22nd June. Focussing mainly on 2019/20 students/apps that need to complete and where the current awarding body flexibilities do not allow full completion remotely and or they don't have the technology/connectivity to complete this from their homes.

Three tutors have made face to face visits in June to learners that were at risk of disengagement and all risk assessments and social distancing planning has worked perfectly. We plan for face to face for observations (predominantly outdoor activities at nurseries and childminders) and testing where it is needed to begin in July and a combination of remote and face to face where necessary to the end of the year.

We have published our recovery plan on the website and will update as plans evolve.

### **Hair, Beauty, Retail, HSC, Hospitality, Child Care Providers**

We are awaiting the re- opening of Hotels and Restaurants before we start to work on practical sessions in the workplace. We have managed to work virtually with our apprenticeships up to date and will continue to do so until we are able to access the workplaces.

The hair, barbering and beauty sectors are awaiting further information on the salons opening but our staff have done training on how to prepare salons for the new way of servicing clients and adhering to social distance rules.

HSC learners have continued working throughout, some employers have asked for additional support to cope with the demand and they have been completing a lot of on the job training & development. We do not expect to access HSC learners on site until at least September if not later.

Child Care settings are starting to increase their demands as schools & workplaces reopen, however we will see if that continues with the changing rules.

Most furloughed apprentices in Early Years are back or returning in July with the rest that are in schools hoping to return in September. Our residential childcare apprentices have had no disruption.

### **Adult Education / Traineeships Providers**

For traineeships, instead of letting them go, we have asked them return to us September - Dec. We have continued with engaging and communicating with them and we will try to find them permanent placements during this time as we feel we have a strong moral obligation to them.

We have continued working with our traineeship learners and developed online modules for them to complete. We have opened one of our sites for appointment only trainees to work on their programme and find vacancies. We have seen an increase in employers interested in taking trainees on.

We are developing a video to send out to our learners, parents, employers on our approaches to opening centres, to reassure and show the changes, social distancing rules and how to get around the sites safely for classroom learners.

We're reviewing all our options for restarting, much of the learning has now taken place and most (not all) assessments are tutor graded, but there's a lot of our learners for whom home isn't a safe place so we need different plans and risk assessment for those learners. Longer term, I cannot see "normal" returning any time soon, much enrolment and learning will be virtual with plans for assessments and specialist support developing over time.

Planning on opening the centre for job centre referrals from the end of June. We have seen that a lot of AEB JCP clients have not been able to engage online during lockdown, but the job centres are keen for us to restart classroom provision. This will be a staggered approach with smaller class sizes and start time / breaks. Also, for those who use public transport looking at funding taxi's for them so they can get to centre.

Planning for the centre re-opening July but will wait on guidance. We have a deep clean booked in and looking at social distance measures. We will be looking at limiting the number of learners in centre so many sessions will still be run online/zoom with ideally the only learners in centre being the ones we can't support remotely.

### **Working with Employers & Recruitment**

Access to employers is next on our radar after planning for safe opening of the centre, we are sending questionnaire/risk assessments to them as we have completions due in July that need some onsite work. With manufacturing open, most are still restricting visitors, especially onto their shop floor but we are looking for exemption with appropriate PPE.

New starts in June will give us opportunity to test new delivery arrangements and as we get more information from employers we will respond accordingly to meet their rules.

Some employers are not keen or happy about staff members visiting apprentices or sending them to our centre for off the job. Apprentices are being brought back into some workplaces on a rota basis while we are seeing other employers only bringing more senior staff back from furlough for the interim period, apprentices will be the last to start back and there are concerns that not all will have a position to return to.

We are currently consulting with our larger levy businesses to understand how their world will look in the coming weeks as people start to ease back in, at the moment we don't have any examples on how they are re introducing their employees back but we will continue to support remotely until both the employer and our SMT are satisfied that both the tutor and the learner will be safe.

We are working with our employers to complete risk assessments and discuss what plans & preparations they have in place – are they using the Gov checklist and sign off document or using their own documentation which we are requesting copies of.

One of our teachers went out for a workplace visit for the first time yesterday, he had to have his temperature checked when arriving, and when he left site, he was given disposable wipes to wipe the area where he had been with the learner.

Recruitment of Apps for next year is a concern and we are predicting that some existing apps will be made redundant. We expect more redundancies as furlough starts to end and it will take SME workplaces longer to pick up and recover.

### **Recommendations**

- Complete thorough risk assessments on the different ages & sectors you work with and have differentiated plans in place with priority groups identified
- Develop staff / learner ratio for centre access
- Communicate plans to all learners, employers & staff prior to returning to ease any anxiety or worries –use of videos to send out or put onto website, VLE or internal system is a good approach.
- Review curriculum to allow for smaller groups, staggered start / end times, staggered access to learners in the workplace

- Review how learners & staff will commute to work, or centres and any adjustments needed for safe commuting
- Utilise the Gov checklist & certificate for opening centres to support your RA's, H&S checks and social distancing rules, PPE requirements for staff
- Develop evidence pack of expected checks with employers, keep copies of this internally – also identify what employers expect you to provide for PPE, H&S, RA for your delivery staff working on employers site
- Keep a track of potentially redundant apprentices so they can be quickly supported to alternative employers or routes
- Develop plans for catering, refreshments, breaks, leaving site – for staff and learners
- Keep plans in place until December 2020.

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