

Provider access legislation

Key information





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What is the provider access legislation?

The provider access legislation introduced in January 2018 requires all maintained schools and academies to publish a policy statement setting out opportunities for providers of technical education and apprenticeships to access year 8-13 pupils, and to make sure the statement is followed.

What are the new requirements of the provider access legislation?

The updated provider access legislation specifies schools must provide at least six encounters for all their students, during school years 8- 13

- two encounters for pupils during the 'first key phase' (year 8 or 9) that are mandatory for all pupils to attend
- two encounters for pupils during the 'second key phase' (year 10 or 11) that are mandatory for all pupils to attend
- two encounters for pupils during the 'third key phase' (year 12 or 13) that are mandatory for the school to put on but optional for pupils to attend

To promote the quality and consistency of provider encounters, the legislation includes a new set of minimum information that the school must ask the provider to give pupils during each encounter.

What do I need to do?

Schools will need to arrange and evidence the encounters and providers will need to deliver them. Together they will need to ensure that these encounters are meaningful and impactful for pupils.

How is this different to the original legislation?

It sets out new requirements on the number of encounters, mandates that all learners must attend, requires that they take place during the normal school day and specifies what these encounters need to contain as a minimum, for example the opportunity for pupils to ask questions.

Where can I access support?

Our national team and careers hubs are there to support you including helping you identify how to find partners to deliver these encounters and sharing best practice on making it meaningful.

Where can I find more information?

The dedicated [provider access legislation landing page](#) will hold all of the information you need and we will continue to update this with new resources from ourselves and partners to support you as we approach the new guidance being enacted in January 2023.

When engaging with a provider to provide an encounter, what information do they need to share?

- information about the provider and the approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships that the provider offers
- information about the careers to which those technical education qualifications or apprenticeships might lead
- a description of what learning or training with the provider is like
- responses to questions from the pupils about the provider or approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships

Contact us

If you have any questions regarding PAL, please contact a member of the team at provideraccess@careersandenterprise.co.uk

Can encounters be online?

We expect most provider encounters to be face-to-face but encourage a blended approach with the use of virtual engagement where access may be an issue. Online engagement can offer a variety of benefits which include greater flexibility, efficiency and the ability to draw on a wider pool of providers. If a school opts to provide an online provider encounter, they must ensure that the encounter is meaningful and high quality while following the same standards as a face-to-face encounter. The encounter should be live and not a pre-recorded video to ensure it is tailored to the school and that pupils are able to ask questions. Some pupils may benefit from online encounters if they do not feel comfortable with face-to-face encounters.

Can I do two encounters with the same provider?

The legislation includes flexibility for schools to arrange meetings with the same provider across more than one 'key phase'. However, within the same key phase, schools must always provide encounters with two different providers to meet the legal requirement. This means that an FE college talking to pupils multiple times across year 10 and 11 (the second key phase) would only count as one mandatory provider encounter under the terms of the legal duty.

For example, a school may invite an FE college to talk to pupils in the first key phase (year 8 to 9) about key stage 4 options and to talk to pupils in the second key phase (year 10 to 11) about post-16 options.

Who should attend?

The school should not do anything which might limit the ability of pupils to attend. It would not be acceptable for schools to restrict invitations to selected groups of pupils or hold events outside of normal school hours.

Provider encounters that take place outside of school hours, for example parents evenings, do not count towards fulfilment of the legal requirement for six provider encounters, but schools are still encouraged to provide these complementary experiences for pupils and their parents.

Who can represent the training provider at a visit?

Persons acting on behalf of a provider may represent the provider, or accompany the provider, if they are particularly well placed to engage and inform pupils about the options available. For example, a University Technical College or an apprenticeship provider may ask to bring a key employer with them on a provider visit.

Do I need to update my provider access policy?

Every school should review their arrangements for provider access in line with the changes to the legislation and prepare a new policy statement setting out the circumstances in which education and training providers will be given access to pupils. This statement, and wider careers programme, will need to be updated with information about how the school will meet the new legal requirement to put on six provider encounters, prior to the new duty coming into force on 1 January 2023. With the changes to the duty coming into force part way through the 2022/23 academic year, we strongly encourage schools to take the necessary steps to transition to the new arrangements as soon as possible.

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