

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough

CAREERS HUB

Provider Access Legislation
12/01/2023

What is Provider Access Legislation (PAL)?

Repeated surveys and reports identified that students were not sufficiently aware of vocational and technical opportunities and pathways and consequently some were making inappropriate choices in relation to their options at each transition point. This lack of awareness also meant that England is failing to train its workforce of the future in the technical skills that are required to make the country competitive in an increasingly competitive global market for skills.

To address this PAL was introduced into law in January 2018 and extended in January of this year. The legislation was passed to ensure that young people in schools and colleges were able to learn about the range of vocational and technical education options and pathways from the providers of the qualifications.

The extension has been designed to make sure that from Y8 to Y11 all students will have an annual encounter and that in Y12 and 13 students are provided with an opportunity of an encounter each year

What is my school/college required to do?

PAL specifies schools must provide at least six encounters with providers of technical education or apprenticeships 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, to take place any time during year 8 or between 1 September and 28 February during year 9.
- Two encounters for pupils during the 'second key phase' (year 10 or 11) that are mandatory for all pupils to attend, to take place any time during year 10 or between 1 September and 28 February during year 11.
- 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 take place any time during year 12 or between 1 September and 28 February during year 13.

Schools should encourage all pupils to attend the encounters, however, optional attendance for older pupils recognises that, while many 16- to- 18-year-olds will benefit from finding out more about post-18 technical options, some will be in the sixth form having made a firm decision to pursue their chosen pathway.

You cannot count two encounters with the same provider in the same phase, this would only count as one

Which providers can my school use?

Encounters can be delivered by a range of providers and the DfE has identified that they may fall into the following categories:-

- General Further Education Colleges
- Independent Training Providers
- Institutes of Technology
- University Technical Colleges
- Other Schools that are offering technical education, such as T Levels or other vocational qualifications.
- Employers acting as the representative of an Independent Training Provider

The provider must deliver technical education or apprenticeships in order for an encounter to be PAL compliant. This can include qualifications such as BTECs, Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Technicals and T Levels so a provider could be another school offering one or more of these options.

What should a session look like?

All six encounters must happen for a reasonable period of time during the standard school day. Provider encounters should be face-to-face but a blended approach, with the use of virtual engagement, may be allowed where access is an issue.

The session should include the following information as a minimum

- 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

If a school is unable to provide a face to face encounter and has no option but to use the virtual option there must be an opportunity for questions and answers so any virtual encounter must have a live element even if some of it is pre-recorded.

What should my school do now?

An immediate action is to update your "Provider Access Statement". The new DfE guidance Statutory guidance "Careers guidance and access for education and training providers" includes a template for schools to use to ensure that they are compliant. See below for a link to the document.

Review your current arrangements for the provision of encounters for your students to ensure that they are PAL compliant and plan for the delivery of additional encounters to make sure that all year groups are provided with an encounter, or the option of an encounter for years 12 and 13.

How will the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Careers Hub support my school or college?

The Hub is working on several initiatives to support schools, colleges, and the provider community, to help with the implementation of PAL. This includes:-

- The establishment of a CPCA All Skills Provider Forum
- The development of a database of providers who are prepared to deliver PAL compliant sessions into schools
- The Rethink Apprenticeship Project which includes workshops for senior leaders on PAL
- Identification of gaps across the CPCA region in the capacity of the provider network to deliver sessions.
- Lobbying on behalf of schools with the provider community to support the development of PAL compliant engagements
- Involvement in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's Local Skills Improvement Plan to ensure that support to schools is on the agenda

The most important source of support for your school, from the Careers Hub, comes in the form of your Enterprise Coordinator who is there to help through every stage of this process. If you are unsure who your Enterprise Coordinator is your Careers Leader should know or you can contact our Senior Enterprise Coordinator, Alvina Morey to find out at alvina.morey@growthworks.uk.

Resources and sources of information

Careers and Enterprise Company

[Provider access legislation Key information](#)

[Promoting All Pathways Resource](#)

[PAL information slide deck](#)

[Careers guidance and access for education and training providers- Resource Gateway](#)

Department for Education

[Statutory guidance - Careers guidance and access for education and training providers](#)

[Access to schools for education and training providers - Examples of good practice](#)