

Adult Education Budget (AEB) devolution readiness: self-assessment evidence checklist

To demonstrate readiness for AEB devolution from the academic year 2025/26, you will need to submit the following to the Department for Education by **29 March 2024**:

1. A letter from your CEO (or equivalent) which confirms
 - a. how you will improve the delivery of adult education functions in your area and associated improvement of outcomes for residents
 - b. how you will effectively deliver the operational processes and functions to support this
 - c. that you are content the area will be ready to deliver the function to your residents from academic year 2025/26

2. Your AEB strategic skills plan (SSP), as described at Section 2, to support statement a.
Evidence to support statements a, b and c. (Our suggestions for evidence you could consider to support this statement are listed in Section 2)

Section 1 – Improving adult education delivery to your residents

The Secretary of State (SoS) may only make the order to devolve statutory functions to a Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA), Combined County Authority (CCA) or Local Authority as applicable, if they consider that the making of the order is “likely to improve the exercise of those functions in the area or areas to which the order relates.”

Please note that the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill will amend the test under section 105B Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 for the making of an order. This will be that the Secretary of State considers that the making of the statutory instrument “is likely to improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of some or all of the people who live or work in the area or areas to which the order relates”. Providing this Bill passes, we will be applying this test to areas in accordance with the Bill.

AEB strategic skills plans (SSPs) will be considered as **your evidence** to support your CEO’s statement and to demonstrate this to the SoS. They are an opportunity for you to show how you can improve the delivery of adult education to your residents and improve outcomes for them.

They should show:

- a) Evidence base used to determine priorities for example

- have you drawn on data and research from the LEP in your area's plans (including that funded by DfE via the SAPs programme up until March 2023), if so, how?
 - have you assessed current delivery/set any benchmarks for improvements?
- b) how the AEB will be used to achieve your objectives;
 - c) how you will support national objectives;
 - d) the impact of your decision-making on learners, employers and learning providers;
 - e) preparation has been taken to reflect your intentions with regard to commissioning provision and that you are engaging with local stakeholders in doing so;
 - f) links, where appropriate, to intelligence and recommendations set out in Local Skills Improvement Plans developed by designated employer representative bodies.
 - g) links to, and builds on, broader economic growth plans for the area – please specify which plans you are drawing upon
 - h) How will you ensure you have robust local accountability and assurance processes in place to support the expectations set out within the English Devolution Accountability Framework'?

Section 2 – Suggested evidence

Your CEO should in their letter state that your area will be ready to deliver adult education functions to your residents from academic year 2025/26.

The evidence **suggested** below is intended to support this statement. We do not expect you to have all processes, communications, documentation, etc. for 2025/26 finalised by this point. However, the evidence you provide will need to clearly demonstrate how you will arrive at a satisfactory position, if these things are not already in place in time for assuming the functions. You are also welcome to set out what additional requirements you anticipate needing from DfE/ESFA in order to arrive at a satisfactory position in time for devolution.

For each theme below, please:

- give a **brief answer**
- include descriptions of the **products and outputs** that support your answer **and attach evidence**, if available
- include hyperlinks (web addresses) for **evidence you have already published**
- state who will give **final approval** for the products and outputs, and the governance processes you will use to get that approval, wherever appropriate

Section 3: Estimated timescales and next steps

Areas whose deals are commencing 1 August 2025: The window for you to develop your readiness criteria will be open from September 2023 to May 2024, following which we will be assessing the submission from June to July 2024, after which we will notify you about whether you have successfully met the criteria. Our approval of the readiness criteria could be conditional on changes we want you to make to current systems, processes or structures or where you have interim or draft systems, processes or structures in place, having final versions in place once the devolved authority has been created and prior to funding being devolved to you in August 2025. These conditions will be clearly set out in the Notification Letter we send once we have assessed and approved your readiness.

Governance

Information requirement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categories where we require a final or most current version of by the time readiness criteria are submitted are in bold, accepting that some of these will change by the time your devolution deal begins • Please note that if the devolved authority has not been established by the time you submit your readiness criteria, you can send documentation or processes from the accountable body leading on implementation 	Current Position – are arrangements in place (Y/N)	If yes, evidence to support requirement <i>could</i> include	If no please provide brief explanation on what you are planning to do/put in place	Target date for completion if requirement not yet in place
A clear constitution (or similar document) which details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the governance framework and operating principles, including investigations/complaints whistleblowing policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • currently in place • (if different to the above) which will be in place once the AEB has been devolved 	Y	The EMCCA Constitution The EMCCA Assurance Framework Draft Operational governance arrangements for when AEB starts are being developed.	Policies relating to Whistleblowing and complaints are still being finalised.	Aug 2024

		Additional information on Governance is contained Supplementary Evidence Pack V1.0.		
<p>Internal Audit Committee awareness of the AEB devolution project</p> <p>Is the project on your risk register and has it been audited (or is due to be) and a report made</p>	In development	The EMCCA is currently developing its approach to Audit and Risk. Additional information is contained Supplementary Evidence Pack V1.0.	Develop and adopt approach to Audit and Risk	Aug 2024

Financial

Information requirement	Current Position – are arrangements in place (Y/N)	If yes, evidence to support requirement <i>could</i> include	If no please provide brief explanation on what you are planning to do/put in place	Target date for completion if requirement not yet in place

Compliance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014¹	In development	The EMCCA is currently developing its approach to Audit and Risk. Additional information is contained Supplementary Evidence Pack V1.0	Develop and adopt approach to Audit and Risk	Mar 2025
Please provide confirmation that your Internal Audit team are aware of their responsibilities towards this funding stream to verify processes and controls.	N	The EMCCA is currently developing its approach to Audit and Risk. Additional information is contained Supplementary Evidence Pack V1.0	Develop and adopt approach to Audit and Risk	Mar 2025

Procurement

Information requirement	Current Position – are the requirements in place (Y/N) if no please provide brief explanation	If yes, evidence to support requirement <i>could</i> include	If no please provide brief explanation on what you are planning to do/put in place	Target date for completion if requirement not in place
What plans, systems and processes you will have for procuring/commissioning AEB provision and how will you ensure compliance with the appropriate legal regulations for procurement.	In development	A draft Commissioning Strategy is being developed. Nottinghamshire County Council will	Complete final documentation	Aug 2024

¹ This Act requires you to have in place an external audit arrangement to annually report on whether your accounts and statements present fairly the financial position and whether you have put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources to secure value for money.

		<p>procure/commission on behalf of the EMCCA. Additional information is contained Supplementary Evidence Pack V1.0</p> <p>In addition to the SSP, the commissioning strategy will be data lead, linking into the EMCCA's priorities. In addition, close analysis of DFE funding rules and other devolved MCA's will be used to determine flexibilities to introduce but to also not destabilise the market in the first year of delivery.</p>		
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Contracting and funding agreements

Information requirement	Current Position – are the requirements in place (Y/N) if no please provide brief explanation	If yes, evidence to support requirement <i>could</i> include	If no please provide brief explanation on what you are planning to do/put in place	Target date for completion if requirement not in place
Are contracting arrangements planned which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reflect the type of organisation you are contracting with (i.e. not for profit organisation - college/local authority or commercial provider) 	In development	Draft contracting and funding agreements are being developed. These will build on the ones currently	Complete final documentation	Feb 2025

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • define the terms and conditions for provision funded through the AEB? • allow for varying contracts, if required • the standards you expect providers to adhere to • how you will audit providers • steps you would take in the event that you identify they have not complied with your contractual requirements . 		<p>used by the ESFA. Additional information is contained Supplementary Evidence Pack V1.0</p> <p>Copy of proposed draft contract and or draft grant funding agreement to be used in connection with providers delivering AEB provision on behalf of the devolved authority.</p>		
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Payments

Information requirement	Current Position – are the requirements in place (Y/N) if no please provide brief explanation	If yes, evidence to support requirement <i>could</i> include	If no please provide brief explanation on what you are planning to do/put in place	Target date for completion if requirement not in place
Planned processes to make payments against <i>your</i> AEB policy and funding rules	In development	Information on the development of the payments process.	Complete final documentation and test processes.	APR 2025

		Additional information is contained Supplementary Evidence Pack V1.0		
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AEB policy: funding rules and learner eligibility. Provider allocations and Funding Formula and Rates

Information requirement	Current Position – are the requirements in place (Y/N) if no please provide brief explanation	If yes, evidence to support requirement <i>could</i> include	If no please provide brief explanation on what you are planning to do/put in place	Target date for completion if requirement not in place
<p>Clear draft documented rules and principles that safeguard public funding.</p> <p>The rules should confirm how funding is earned, learner eligibility, contracting and sub-contracting, evidence requirements, payment and performance management arrangements for AEB funding.</p> <p>Please explain how you will ensure your rules/process are workable for providers? What processes will you have for consulting with them?</p>	In Development	<p>In the first year of devolution, the plan is to maintain stability in the system and follow DFE funding and performance management rules, including funding rates and formula. However, review of other devolved MCA's will be undertaken to identify any best practice and will be implemented subject to affordability and local need.</p> <p>Additional information is contained Supplementary Evidence Pack V1.0</p>	Complete final documentation and test processes.	May 2025 – subject to final issue of DFE rules

How and when will you publish funding rules, provider funding agreements or contracts and their allocations		<p>Grant provider allocations will follow a similar if not identical time frame as DFE.</p> <p>Contracts for services will follow EMCCA's procurement process.</p> <p>Additional information is contained Supplementary Evidence Pack V1.0</p>		
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Data Collection and Reporting

Information requirement	Current Position – are the requirements in place (Y/N) if no please provide brief explanation	If yes, evidence to support requirement <i>could</i> include	If no please provide brief explanation on what you are planning to do/put in place	Target date for completion if requirement not in place
Do you have a data sharing agreement in place with the department?	Y	Please see attached DSA completion emails.		
Do you have additional requirements for data held / not held by the department to support your operational processes? If yes, have you balanced the need for this data against the possible impact on providers?	In development	Additional requirements will be identified by attending the Devolution Data Governance Group and by establishing formal working arrangements with DfE		Ongoing

		place based teams: Additional information is contained Supplementary Evidence Pack V1.0		
<p>Do you have plans in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the education and training funded through the AEB? What data would you draw upon to achieve this? How would you measure the satisfaction of learners/other stakeholders?</p> <p>How would you drive improvements over time/measure improvements?</p>	In development	<p>The EMCCA is currently developing a programme and suite of evaluation tools it may utilise to measure impact and identify areas for improvement. This includes an impact review in year 2 devolution of Tailored Learning and year 3 will incorporate a full impact on ASF provision and will be Outcome focussed.</p> <p>Additional information is contained Supplementary Evidence Pack V1.0</p>		Ongoing

Provider Management

Information requirement	Current Position – are the requirements in place (Y/N) if no please provide brief explanation	If yes, evidence to support requirement <i>could</i> include	If no please provide brief explanation on what you are planning to do/put in place	Target date for completion if requirement not in place
Provider Management arrangements which plan to assess provider performance including: Financial Health and intervention	In development	Work is currently underway to develop Provider Management arrangements. Additional	Complete final Provider Management Arrangements	May 2025

Arrangements for handling provider failure and how you would protect the interests of learners in such a scenario		information is contained Supplementary Evidence Pack V1.0		
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