

FAQs

We have listed some of the frequently asked questions we get asked about the grant. If you can't find what you are looking for please call the team on 0113 348 1818 or email age@the-lep.com.

1 Is the LEP AGE grant an entitlement?

The LEP AGE Grant is not an entitlement. Submission of an application by a business does not guarantee a grant, all applications are dealt with on a first-come, first-served basis subject to funding availability and verification of evidence in relation to eligibility checks.

2 Who can apply for the LEP AGE Grant?

Businesses who have 50 or fewer employees and are based in Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, Wakefield or York. Full eligibility can be found here www.the-lep.com/AGE

3 When can I apply for the grant?

As soon as your apprentice starts their training programme and you have received a signed copy of the 'Apprenticeship Commitment Statement' (must be signed by all 3 parties).

4 Is there a hard copy of the online application form that I can fill in?

Unfortunately the online application form is the only way you can apply but if you are having difficulties with the form please contact the LEP AGE Team by email age@the-lep.com or call 0113 348 1818.

5 How can I check my eligibility?

You can read the eligibility criteria here: www.the-lep.com/AGE

6 Do existing employees on apprenticeships affect my eligibility?

Yes they do, you can only apply for this grant if you've never had an apprentice before or had apprenticeship funded training for your employees.

7 We are part of a franchise are we classed as an SME for the purposes this grant?

If the franchise, employs 50 or less employees (across the whole franchise, subsidiary, partner organisation) and meets the definition of an SME you can apply.

8 My business is based in Wetherby and has a Leeds postcode, will I qualify for grant?

The grant is available to businesses based within the local authority areas of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, Wakefield or York and the apprentice is employed to work at a site within one of these local authorities. Please check which authority your business address comes under using the following website: <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

9 Can I start an apprentice on the apprentice minimum wage but guarantee an increase to national minimum wage after a successful induction?

No - you will need to pay the National Minimum Wage, not apprenticeship minimum wage, relevant to the apprentice's age from the first day of employment.

10 How much is the national minimum wage?

The minimum wage depends on the age of the apprentice. You can find out the wage you need to pay here: <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

11 Can bonuses paid to the apprentice be used to make up the shortfall if I don't pay the national minimum wage?

No. The aim of the grant is to encourage more businesses to pay the national minimum wage, relevant to the age of the apprentice, from the start of their employment and throughout the training.

12 Can an employer qualify for the grant if they have had an apprentice in the past, but not claimed a grant previously?

No, the grant is aimed at encouraging employers- who have never accessed apprenticeship funded learning or part funded learning and have never previously employed an apprentice to create a new post for an apprentice start.

13 I have answered one of the questions incorrectly on the application form and submitted it – what do I do?

You don't need to submit another form. Simply email the LEP apprenticeship grant team at age@the-lep.com telling us the name of your company and what the error is, e.g. I pressed 'no' to the question on the size of the business and I meant to press 'yes'. We will then check against the relevant company information and where eligibility is verified, amend the record originally submitted. This will save duplicate forms being submitted by the business.

14 I haven't received acknowledgement that my application form has been submitted. How will I know that it has been received?

When an application form has been submitted you will receive an automated reply acknowledging this. If you don't receive this there could be a number of reasons:

- It is possible that you have mistyped your email address or have copied and pasted the address ('copy and paste' often throws extra spaces into an email address). Please double check any free text you entered onto the online application form for accuracy before pressing the submit button, or
- You may possibly have saved the application without completing all 'mandatory fields', please go back into the application and check.

Please also check that you have enabled your security/firewall to allow any emails from our address age@the-lep.com through. We advise that if you are applying for a grant that you make sure that this is set up before making the application.

If you are still concerned we may not received your form please contact the LEP AGE Team by email on age@the-lep.com or by phone on **0113 3481818**, Please do not submit another application form at this stage

15 How do I find out about progress of my application?

You can email the LEP AGE Team at age@the-lep.com quoting the reference number generated when you completed the form.

16 Can an employer claim the LEP AGE grant and at the same time as an apprenticeship grant offered by other organisations?

Potentially, yes. However, it is the employer's responsibility to check the relevant guidance for each organisation to find out if they meet the eligibility criteria.

17 My apprentice has been employed by me for 5 months and, in training with the training provider for 11 weeks, but has now decided that this is not for them after all. Can I still claim the grant?

No – the eligibility criteria states clearly that the apprentice must be in training with the training provider and in employment with yourself simultaneously, for 13 weeks.

18 Will the apprentice have to have been in training for 13 weeks before the grant is awarded?

Yes – see the Information for Businesses document and the step by step guide. All apprentices must have been in training and employment (with the same employer) simultaneously for a minimum 13 weeks before any claim can be accessed.

19 When will I find out if my application has been successful?

Within the online application form there are questions where the answers you give may automatically be responded to with a rejection if you do not meet the criteria. Upon submission applications are subject to checking. Once verified the team will inform you of the next stage in the process and what evidence you will need to gather for the next part of the application process. Please note we can only divulge information to the named contact.

20 When will I receive the LEP grant payment?

If eligible, the grant will be paid a minimum of 8 weeks after all final checks on eligibility and evidence have been verified and bank details received. Please note this is 8 weeks after the 13 week qualifying period. Please see the step by step guide.

21 How will I be paid the grant?

If eligible, the grant will be paid directly into the business' bank account by BACS. The payment will show on the statement as being made by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) on behalf of the LEP. An email will be sent to you confirming that payment has been made.

22 Can I offer a contract of less than 30 hours?

In exceptional circumstances, you may be able to offer a contract of less than 30 hours. The LEP reserves the right to request evidence of the rational of the reduced hours. The minimum qualifying period of 13 weeks will be extended to reflect this. This may result in AGE grants no longer being available due to the first –come, first-served criteria.