

Announcement of funding for functional skills study in Social Care

20th April 2021

HEE's Apprenticeship team is very pleased to announce that funding for software to support functional skills has been extended to **all social care providers**. To date, this software has been available to all health and social care employers who deliver NHS commissioned services but from today it is available for all. Please see below for details.

What software is this?

The software is called **Basic Key Skills Builder**, bksb for short. It helps someone to improve their own skills in maths (numeracy), English (literacy) and IT (digital skills).

How does it work?

Once the employer has set up an account (a quick and easy process), the learner takes a **diagnostic assessment** of their current skills. This takes about 40 minutes, during which time they are asked a selection of questions on the topics of numeracy, literacy and digital skills.

Answers to these questions determine the learner's current skill level. This is broken down into the specific areas of each of the topics to assess skills on each area. Once complete, the programme generates an **Individual Learning Plan (ILP)** for the learner to improve on areas where they are below the level they would like to be. The software contains lots and lots of engaging and interactive resources on each of the topic areas, again broken down into each specific sub-category.

What can I use it for?

- To study towards a functional skills exam. E.g. if you want to enrol onto an apprenticeship, or other programme of study that requires the equivalent of a pass at GCSE (grade 4, previously a C grade) in English and maths but do not have this level
- To generally improve competence and confidence, for job satisfaction and retention
- To improve quality of care and patient safety

How do I sign up?

The first step is to email hee@bksb.co.uk to tell bksb the following info: name of employer, details of contact person and anticipated number of learners. Don't worry over the number of learners, we ask this purely to help us predict capacity. A guesstimate is fine, you will not be monitored on this and if you don't use all your licenses you will not be penalised.

Once bksb receive your email, they will contact you to arrange a 30-minute consultation meeting/call, which we strongly encourage you to utilise. In this meeting your bksb representative will discuss your specific needs as an employer and will work with you to tailor a support package to meet them. S/he will take you through the following:

- The full suite of learning for maths, English and digital skills
- The simple sign-up process
- The initial and diagnostic assessments, which form individual learning plans
- How to check learners' progress & run reports for cohorts of learners
- The full suite of digital learning
- ESOL & IELTS tools, dyslexia and dyscalculia indicators and more

For further details on all of the above, and to arrange your 30-minute consultation, please click on the dedicated webpage [here](#)

Further to bksb, is there any other support available?

Yes. We have also funded other online resources specifically for the different subject areas, including specific support for learners for whom English is not their first language. For more information on these, click [here](#). We also strongly recommend partnering with a local college or education provider, who can help you with funded functional skills learning, in the classroom and face to face. Often this can be provided in small numbers and even 1 on 1.

What happens when someone is ready to sit their functional skills exam?

This is also something you can talk to your local college or training provider about, to see what local options are available to you but also, from summer 2021, HEE will also be funding access to exams. To find out about this, please email kirsty.marsh-hyde@hee.nhs.uk

Is the exam the end point?

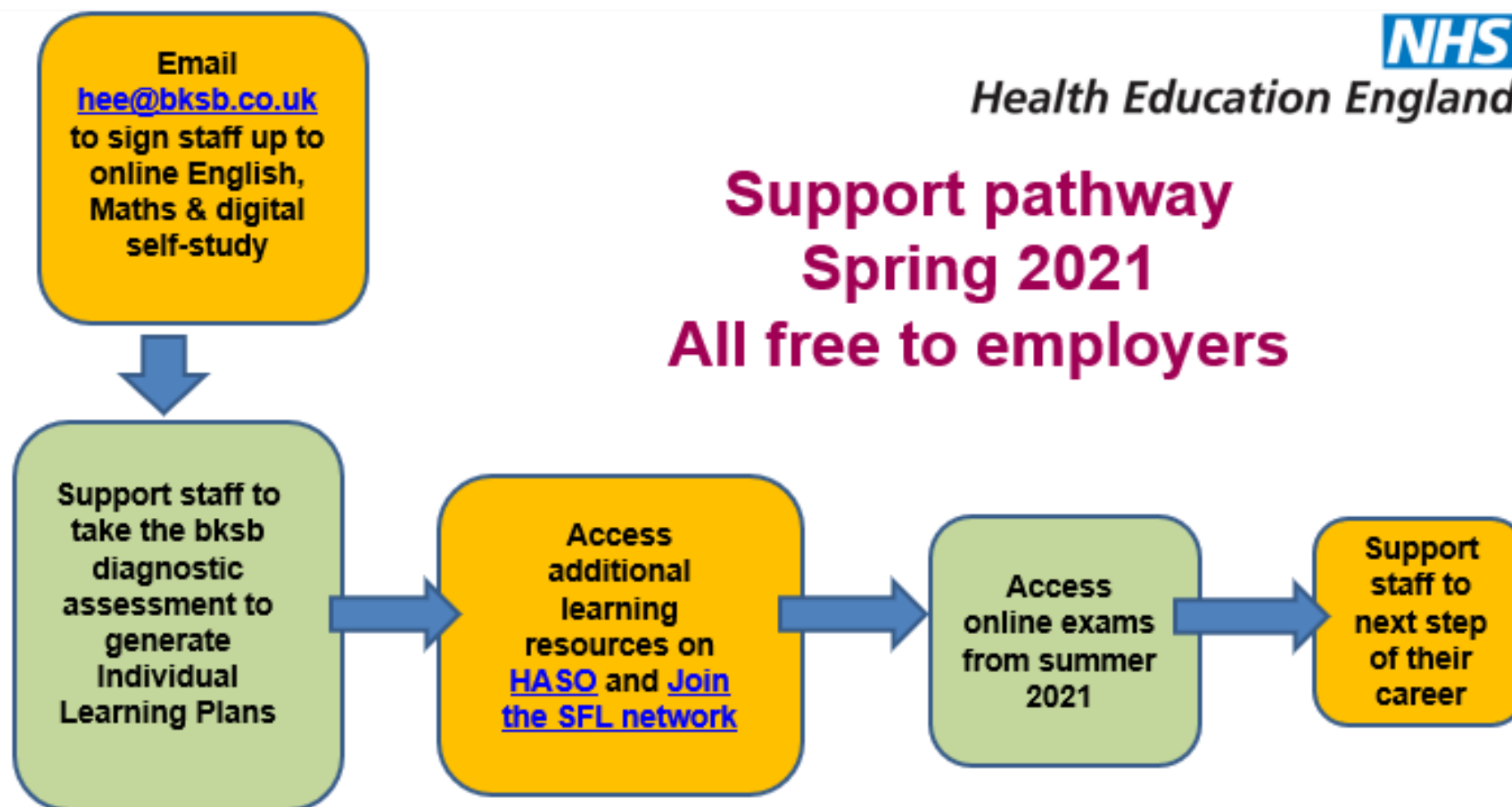
Although the motivation for lots of people to engage with functional skills is to get onto a course, we strongly recommend looking at functional skills as life-long study. All of us can keep topping up our confidence and build this into our working lives. It is to the benefit of ourselves, colleagues and patients.

What does the end-to-end learning pathway look like?

Please see below. To access all support detailed below, please follow this link:

<https://haso.skillsforhealth.org.uk/skills-for-life/>

Support pathway Spring 2021 All free to employers



Where needed – Engage with our [ESOL support](#) to increase confidence in English.
Also use [ENIC](#) tool to check equivalency status of qualifications gained overseas