



# PATHWAYS TRAINING FUND

## Application Guidance



# PATHWAYS TRAINING FUND

## *Improving the skills of your Workforce*

*Training your employees for the future*

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### APPLICATION GUIDANCE for SMEs – 2022

#### The basics

- **Up to 75%** of your staff training will be covered – with a maximum grant of **£500 per employee** and £3,000 per employer, to be reimbursed once training is completed.
- Additional funding will be available for Innovation and Net Zero training as **additional training** later in the year.
- Training can be both **accredited or non-accredited** from Level 1 to Level 7 and include whole qualifications, modules or units.
- PTF **cannot fund** any training that has already been paid for before your application has been approved.
- You should contact a training provider in our network (see Prospectus) to find out about a course and when it is running.
- Applicants must be **Suffolk or Norfolk-based SMEs or Social Enterprises** and should not be publicly-funded bodies such as local authorities or schools.
- This guidance takes you through the entire application process step-by-step.
- If you need any help at any point, please contact the Pathways Training Fund team (PTF team) at [sparc@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:sparc@suffolk.gov.uk) or one of the training provider partners below.

# How to apply to the Pathways Training Fund

## ELIGIBILITY

First, you will need to fill in the online SME eligibility form. The guidance for this is set out below. This form will automatically get sent to PTF team mailbox when you submit it ([sparc@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:sparc@suffolk.gov.uk)).

### [SME Eligibility Form](#) – online link

#### 1. Organisation Details (Questions 1-14)

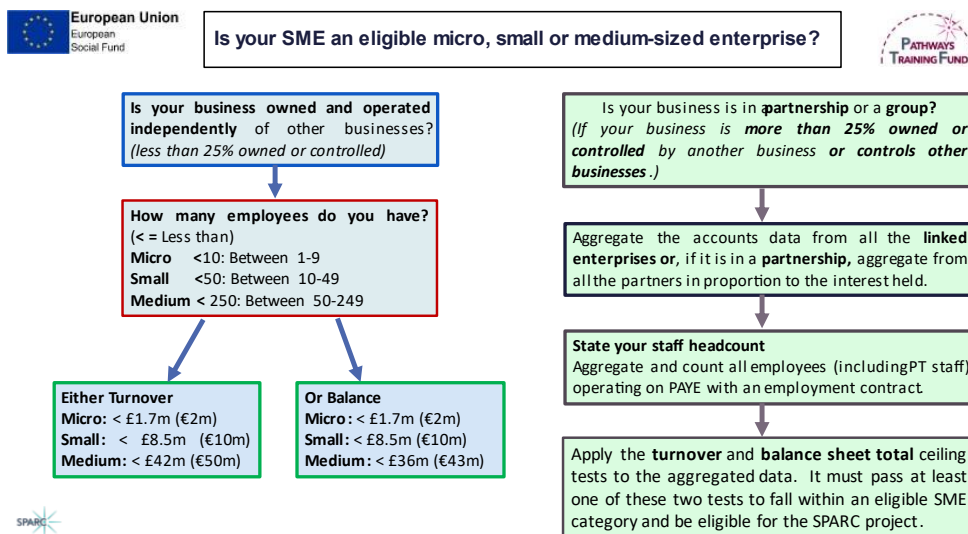
Questions 1 – 14 ask you for basic contact details, location, business sector, Companies House registration (if applicable) and a website address.

#### 2. Ownership (Question 15)

To be eligible as an SME you will either be an **autonomous** (independent) business – less than 25% owned or controlled by another company – or you may have some form of linkage or connection in a **group** or **partnership**.

Question 15a asks if your business is autonomous or not. 15b and c deal with linkage and partnerships. The diagram below shows the difference (*blue – autonomous, green – linked / connected / partnership*). If your company has control of, or is under the control of, another company, or both companies are under the control of the same person or persons, for example, companies linked in a group - these companies are linked or connected.

*Please note, the turnover and balance ceilings denoted in £s below are approximate.*



### Question 15a: Is your business less than 25% owned or controlled (capital, shares, voting rights) by another business or controls other businesses? Yes or No.

Answers:

15a. My business is autonomous / independent of other businesses.

15b. Another company has significant control of more than 25%.

15c. My company has significant control of another business of more than 25%.

Please note: we will make a check on Companies House to check ownership and control.

#### If you answer Yes to 15b and/or 15c

If another company has significant control of more than 25% of your business or your company has significant control of another business, then the data from all companies needs to be aggregated (as above in green). This means adding together all the other businesses' headcounts and accounts, in proportion to the interest held.

Please contact us once you have submitted this form and we will send you a partnership form and help you fill it in, if needed.

### 3. Staff Headcount (Question 16)

Your staff size (drop-down options) will determine whether you are a **micro, small or medium-sized** business in Norfolk or Suffolk.

Please include all employees who are operating on PAYE and with an employment contract. This is not always the total number of employees on the payroll because

**part-time staff and those not working the full (reference) year** are treated as fractional values of a full-time employee (FTE):

e.g, 1 employee working 2 days a week = 0.4 FTE, another working 3 days a week = 0.6 FTE and together that totals 1 full-time employee.

If **directors** do not have an employment contract and get employment rights, but have their own different rights and responsibilities from employees, then they are not counted. If they receive a regular salary and do have the same employment contract and rights, they should be included in the employee headcount.

## 4. Definition of Enterprise

Staff headcount and financial ceilings determining enterprise categories ([Article 2 of the Annex of Recommendation 2003/361/EC](#)) are outlined below.

- a **micro enterprise** is defined as an enterprise which employs fewer than 10 persons and whose annual turnover and/or annual balance sheet total does not exceed EUR 2 million;
- a **small enterprise** is defined as an enterprise which employs fewer than 50 persons and whose annual turnover and/or annual balance sheet total does not exceed EUR 10 million.
- a **medium enterprise** is defined as an enterprise which employs fewer than 250 persons and whose annual turnover does not exceed EUR 50 million and/or annual balance sheet total does not exceed EUR 43 million.

An entity must meet the staff headcount threshold and at least 1 of the other conditions	Definition	Staff headcount	Turnover (or)		Balance sheet total	
			<i>Approximate € to £ conversion</i>			
	Medium-sized	50 - 249	≤ € 50 m	(£42 m)	≤ € 43 m	(£36 m)
	Small	10 - 49	≤ € 10 m	(£8.5 m)	≤ € 10 m	(£8.5 m)
Micro	1 - 9	≤ € 2 m	(£1.7 m)	≤ € 2 m	(£1.7 m)	

## 5. Turnover or Balance sheet (Question 17)

When you are clear which headcount group you fit into – micro, small or medium – then apply just **one** of the **turnover** or **balance** sheet thresholds to confirm your category. (Question 17).

Enterprise category	Headcount: annual work unit (AWU)	Annual turnover	or	Annual balance sheet total
Medium-sized	< 250	≤ EUR 50 million	or	≤ EUR 43 million
Small	< 50	≤ EUR 10 million	or	≤ EUR 10 million
Micro	< 10	≤ EUR 2 million	or	≤ EUR 2 million

Approximate conversion rates are:

€2m = £1.7m; €10m = £8.5m; €43m = £37m; €50m = £43m

Please note: We will apply the [HMRC exchange rates for 2022: monthly - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hmrc-exchange-rates-for-2022-monthly) ([www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)).

The PTF team will confirm eligibility of staff headcount, turnover or balance from data available online on Companies House. We will contact you if more information is needed (e.g, turnover amount for the 2020/21 reference year).

## 6. State Aid

### **De Minimis State Aid (Questions 24-27)**

State Aid is any advantage granted by public authorities through state resources on a selective basis that could potentially distort competition and trade in the European Union.

Any Pathways Training Fund grant you receive is considered to be *De minimis* State Aid. This means it will contribute to the total aid you are allowed to get in the relevant 3-year period, under EC Regulation 1407/2013 (*De Minimis* Aid Regulation). *De minimis* state aid calculations will start from tax years 2020 to 2021.

Most businesses will not have received de minimis state aid so will not need to do further checks. You'll need to look at other de minimis state aid you got in the claim year (2020 to 2021) and the previous 2 tax years. This is the relevant 3-year period.

You will need to make sure that you have space under your business sector ceiling (maximum amount you can receive) to get the full amount of grant funding available.

The ceilings below apply to the total amount of *De minimis* aid to a single recipient from **all sources** of *De minimis* aid.

Business sector	Ceiling (€)
Primary production of agriculture products	€20,000
Fisheries and aquaculture sector	€30,000
Road freight transport sector	€100,000
Other, industrial (everyone else)	€200,000

### How to work out de minimis state aid

\*We will use the official Commission exchange rate applicable on the date the offer of *de minimis* funding is made (date of written offer). The rate is updated monthly and the European Commission offers a [rate calculator](#). [Exchange rate \(InforEuro\) / European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

*De minimis* aid may include Employment Allowance (from 6 April 2020), and from March 2021, the full State Aid test should also be applied to these groups:

#### Fully Funded:

- All Apprenticeships (including Advanced) delivered to 16 to 18 year-olds;
- First Level 2;
- First full level 3 for 19-25-year-olds
- Literacy and numeracy at all levels;
- Level 3 'jumpers' (people who miss out level 2).

#### Jointly-funded:

- Apprenticeships
- First Advanced Apprenticeships.

#### Shared investment – employer and public funding

- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) at all levels.

You'll need to ask your training provider for any value that may apply. You should have been told in writing if other aid you have received was *De minimis* state aid. The letter should also tell you how much you got.

If companies are connected, you'll need to:

- add the totals for each of the companies together
- make sure that, together, they are not more than the relevant sector threshold.

We will email you within 48 hours to either confirm your SME eligibility and send you an application pack or ask you for additional information.

## APPLICATION PACK

The application pack consists of the following forms. The PTF team and/or your training provider can help you to fill them in and find the best training for your staff.

### Training Needs – online link

#### 7. Training Needs form

This is an online form which we will receive as soon as you submit it. It has drop-down options to make it easier to fill in. It will provide us and your training provider with a snapshot of your business training needs and help you decide on the best training for your staff.

#### 8. Training Table 1 or 2

If you are selecting training from our **network of training providers in Norfolk and Suffolk**, you will use Table 1 to list: the course(s), cost, training provider, location, main reason for selection, as well as the start and end dates of the training. Please do not name employees here, just put their initials for ID reference.

**Table 2:** If you are buying training from **outside** our Norfolk and Suffolk training provider network, you will need to contact [sparc@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:sparc@suffolk.gov.uk) and we will send you Table 2.

As a minimum standard, all training providers must be an active company, registered with Companies House and/or HMRC and must be on the UK Register of Learning Providers ([UK Register of Learning Providers \(ukrlp.co.uk\)](http://www.ukrlp.co.uk)). This means they have been verified by an external source. See <https://www.ukrlp.co.uk/> for further information.

You will need to provide their 8-digit UKPRN number in Training Table 2 and the information on the Confirmation Table 2 must match what was approved.

Preference will be given to providers who offer qualifications recognised under the [Ofqual Regulated Qualification Framework](#) (RQF).

### Employee Registration Form – online link

#### 9. Employee Registration form

Each employee will need to fill in their own registration form (drop-down options), which takes no more than 10 minutes. This will automatically come to the SPARC email box. The registration form asks for some personal data and it will be treated in line with UK GDPR and explained in our [privacy notice](#). All employee data will be anonymised so that the person is not identifiable for our reporting purposes.



**NB Keeping documents:** Please note all supporting ESF documentation needs to be retained securely for up to 10 years after the grant is paid as it can be subject to audit or on-the-spot checks. This will include: application pack, proof of right to work, eligibility confirmation; certified copies of certification received for training; original invoice for training; De minimis State Aid value of the PTF grant. These need to be retained securely by you.

## APPROVAL OF TRAINING (SELECTION)

The PTF team will check the forms in the application pack and either approve the training or ask you for more information. If your proposal is not approved, we will offer you alternative solutions, including how to amend the proposal or redirect you to other funds. We will confirm by email within 1 working day and send you a Grant Offer.

### 10. Grant Offer

The offer includes: *Grant Agreement, Acceptance Letter, Confirmation Table.*

- Grant Agreement outlines the terms of the training grant.
- Acceptance letter needs to be signed to say you agree with the offer terms.
- Training Confirmation table will be updated and you will need to just confirm the employees' names, give some simple drop-down feedback and date and sign (printed name) it.

The PTF team will add and use unique identification numbers for our reporting purposes, not employees' names.

We will evaluate your proposal and send confirmation of approval by email within 48 hours.

### 11. Pathways Training Fund Network of Training Partners

The network of training providers listed below are all registered on the [UK Register of Learning Providers](#) and have dedicated staff to promote the fund and help you when you choose your courses.

Contact details for each training provider can be found on the back page.

The training partners are:

City College Norwich	College of West Anglia	East Coast College	Suffolk New College
Turning Factor	University of East Anglia	University of Suffolk	West Suffolk College

## 12. Types of Training

We will fund the 'must have' skills that employers need, in these five main areas:

- ▶ Digital Skills and Industry 4.0
- ▶ Leadership, Management, Project Management and Mentoring
- ▶ Customer Service and Client Relationship management
- ▶ Health and Wellbeing
- ▶ Innovation training for new ways of working, products, services & Net Zero

## 13. Digital Prospectus

All the courses that can be funded within the five areas above will be included in the digital prospectus. Each training provider will also have other courses which may be of interest. New courses will be added as they become available.

### BOOKING/PAYING FOR TRAINING

## 14. Booking / buying training courses

Once we confirm receipt of your Grant Acceptance letter, your training choices are approved and you can book and purchase your training. You can go directly to your approved training provider and book, if you are already not in contact.

Please remember to make sure that the information on the Training (Confirmation) Table matches what you are buying. If, for any reason, you decide to change any of the details, such as employee names, course name/type, training start/end dates, you must contact the PTF team at [sparc@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:sparc@suffolk.gov.uk) and we will deal with that and re-approve, if necessary, before purchase is made. You will need to **keep the original training invoice securely** as this will need to be scanned and sent to the PTF team once training is completed.

### TRAINING

## 15. Enrolling on training courses with the training provider

The training provider will undertake a separate enrolment for each employee and will deal with you and your employees directly.

The enrolment process will need to check that your employees are able to manage the content level of the course requirements as well as fit it in with their job and overall capacity to get the best outcomes and results.

If there are any significant changes in course dates the PTF team will need to be notified because we need to know when results will be achieved. We are available at all times to offer support and guidance, including during training.

## GRANT PAYMENT – EVIDENCE NEEDED

### 16. Completion of training (results)

The PTF team will need proof of evidence to support any results for participants. This should be received within 1 week of training completion.

Ideally, a certified copy of the certificate or award notice should be included in the grant claim. If this is not possible or ready by the time you make the claim, E-mails can be used to notify the PTF team of the training results. The network Training Providers will send the employee names and results/course outcomes directly to the PTF team.

For providers outside the network, you will need to arrange for the training provider to email [sparc@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:sparc@suffolk.gov.uk) directly with the results of the training. We will confirm to you when we have received the email from the training organisation.

In either case, the e-mail address should include the name of the organisation in the email address string and ideally the e-mail should also include the logo of the organisation. This result notification should give a description of what has been achieved as a result of the ESF support provided and match the training confirmation table.

### 17. Training Outcome form

We will send you a blank outcome form after we have received your signed grant acceptance form.

You will need to update this and submit it with the grant claim. Most of the information will be pre-populated but you will need to update the training achieved, and the feedback. The employee feedback will confirm the number of employees receiving their highest level of education as a result of the training. The form needs to be dated and signed by you.

### 18. Invoice – certified copy of the original

#### Certification of Evidence

All evidence – invoices and copies of bank statements showing that invoices have been paid – must be certified as a true copy of originals or supported by a covering letter which confirms that all documents are true copies of originals.

This invoice copy (and bank statement copy – see 18 below) will need to be certified as a true copy by an authorised signatory in line with your scheme of delegation, as set out below:

Any certification must be confirmed by the project’s Authorised Signatories in line with scheme of delegation, such as set out below.

I certify that this is a true copy of the original document.	
Signed:	Date:
Position in SME:	Name of SME:

## 19. Bank statement copy

We will need to see a certified copy of the Bank Statement that shows the funds leaving your account and paying the training provider (see 17 above). This statement date should be after the invoice date. Please feel free to redact any other financial transactions on the bank statement that are not related to the invoice / training purchase.

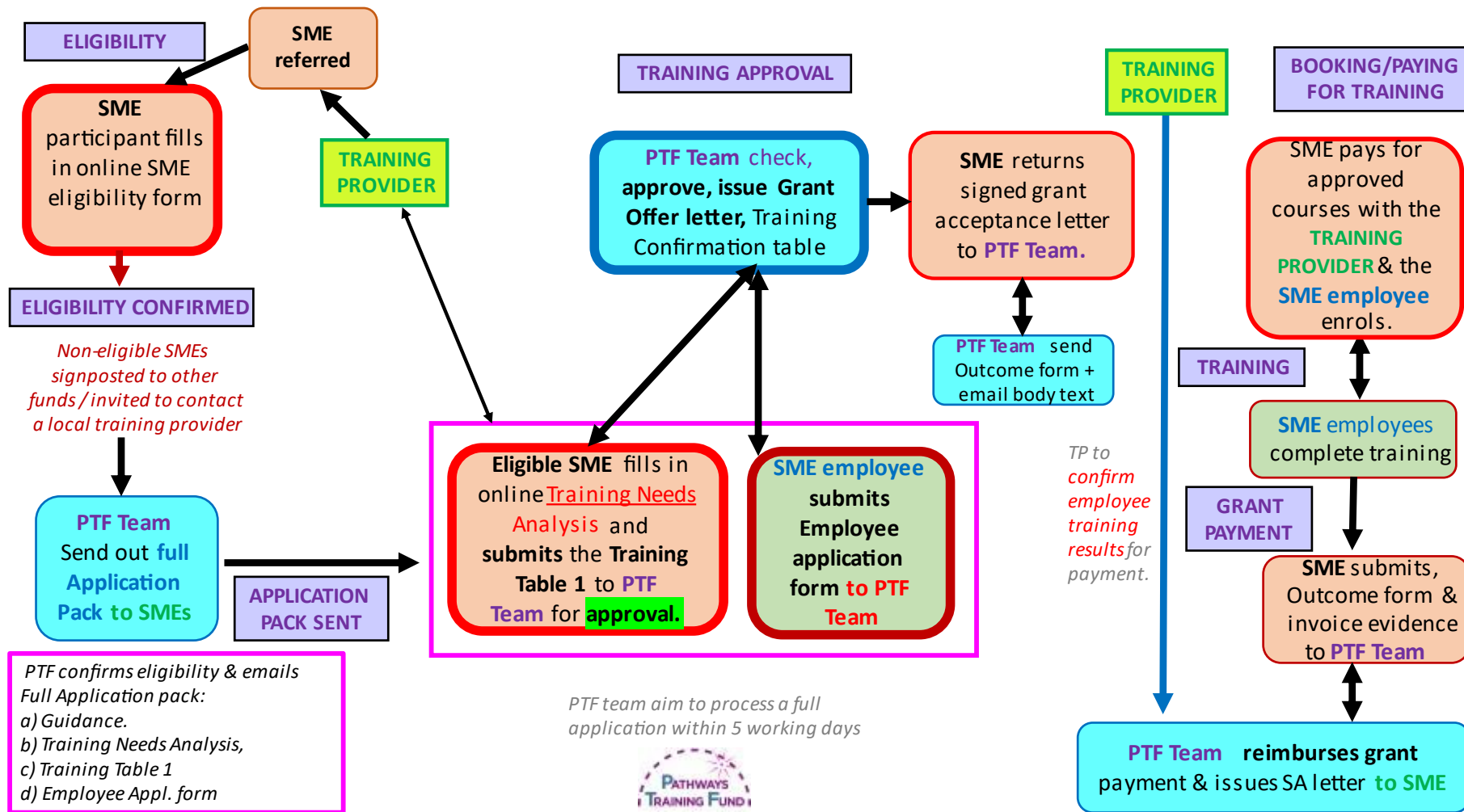
There should be a correlation between the expenditure amount and the associated defrayal evidence (e.g.: invoice number, value, payee name). If the expenditure amount is different to the amount shown in the defrayal documentation, we will be in touch to clarify before we authorise grant payment.

## 20. Payment of Grant

As soon as we have received your complete grant claim, we will verify and reimburse your grant payment within 14 working days.

## 21. De minimis State Aid notification

You will receive a letter from the Pathways Training Fund confirming the value of the *De minimis* State Aid in a separate letter when we reimburse your grant payment.



## Partners



Lucy.Emms@ccn.ac.uk



**College of  
West Anglia**

cwatraining@cwa.ac.uk



r.bunn@eastcoast.ac.uk



**Suffolk  
New  
College**

business@suffolk.ac.uk



**TURNINGFACTOR**  
Developing People Developing Business

funding@turningfactor.com



**University of East Anglia**

productivity.east@uea.ac.uk



**University  
of Suffolk**

engage@uos.ac.uk



**WEST  
SUFFOLK  
COLLEGE**

training@wsc.ac.uk

## Grants

Grants will be paid to eligible SMEs to subsidise the costs of upskilling, training and retraining staff, sourced by our superb network of local training provider partners in Norfolk and Suffolk, or SMEs can procure further afield if they cannot meet your needs.

### Business needs analysis

Training providers can provide a business needs analysis with each company to define current needs and look at bespoke training opportunities in line with the funding rules.

### Funding flexible training

PTF will fund flexible training, from Level 1 to Level 7, which can be accredited or non-accredited.

It can be whole qualifications, modules or units and is intended to address those key skills that employers are lacking in these 'must have' areas:

- ✓ Digital Skills and Industry 4.0, Leadership
- ✓ Management, Project Management and Mentoring
- ✓ Customer Service and Client Relationship Management
- ✓ Health and Well-being
- ✓ Innovation training – for new ideas, ways of working, products or services, Net Zero preparations

All the courses listed in this prospectus are eligible for financing from the Pathways Training Fund.

Each Training Provider's full range can be found by clicking the link above.

**All courses must be completed by September 2023.**

Please click the link for more information and to download the Prospectus and an Eligibility Form.

[CLICK HERE](#)

Please contact [sparc@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:sparc@suffolk.gov.uk) or one of the Training Providers for help and enquiries.