

‘How to’ Apply for a DfE-funded air cleaning unit



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Applying for a DfE-funded air cleaning unit

The Department will make up to 7,000 air cleaning units available for poorly ventilated teaching spaces in state funded schools (primary and secondary), FE colleges and early years settings where quick fixes to improve ventilation are not possible. This is in addition to the 1,000 DfE-funded air cleaning units that we announced on 18 November for SEND and AP settings. The second round of applications will open from 4 January. **Applications will close on 17 January at 9am.**

All state funded schools (primary and secondary), FE colleges and early years settings should [apply here](#). Special and AP settings that were not successful or did not apply in the first round are also eligible in this round. **Special and AP settings should [apply here](#).** Please note **there are different eligibility criteria for different settings**. Please apply via the correct link for your setting type.

Applications will be assessed against strict criteria for their setting type. Making an **application does not guarantee allocation of an air cleaning unit: we will prioritise spaces with the poorest ventilation to receive units based on criteria such as CO₂ levels and occupation density**. Settings with successful applications will be contacted to arrange delivery, with deliveries expected from February 2022. If your setting is not eligible for a funded unit, the online marketplace is available, enabling you to purchase units at a suitable specification and competitive price. The marketplace can be accessed [here](#).

When the use of an air cleaning unit may be suitable

Good ventilation can help reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 and create a safer environment for staff and students.

Where an area of poor ventilation has been identified that cannot be resolved through simple measures such as opening doors and windows, you should explore what remedial works may be required to improve ventilation on a more permanent basis. Where it is not possible to maintain adequate ventilation, it may be appropriate to consider the use of an air cleaning unit while the underlying ventilation issue is addressed:

- When used properly, air cleaning units can help reduce airborne contaminants in a poorly ventilated space, including viruses like COVID-19, while remedial work is undertaken to permanently improve ventilation.
- **Air cleaning units do not reduce CO₂ levels. They are not a substitute for ventilation and should never be used as a reason to reduce or not remediate poor ventilation in the long term.**

Settings will need to make the final decision on whether an air cleaning unit is suitable for their setting. They must consider suitability in line with their own risk assessments and consider the individual needs of their pupils in deciding whether a unit would be suitable e.g. consideration for any children with hearing impairments.

This guide should be read in conjunction with:

- The [How to guide for using CO₂ monitors](#) for the latest information on taking CO₂ readings to assess ventilation levels.
- The [How to guide for using air cleaning units](#), which sets out what to consider before deciding to use an air cleaning unit, and how to use them in your setting.
- The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) guidance for workplaces on [ventilation and air conditioning during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#).

Eligibility criteria for a DfE-funded air cleaning unit: mainstream settings

All state funded schools (primary and secondary), FE colleges and early years settings can apply for a funded air cleaning unit in this round. The application form can be accessed [here](#).

Before submitting an application for a funded air cleaning unit, the following criteria **must** be met:

- ✓ **Sustained high CO₂ readings:** there have been sustained high CO₂ readings (1500ppm or higher) for at least 1 week while the room is occupied, despite taking all measures possible to improve ventilation with the current provisions, e.g. opening windows.
- ✓ **Lengthy remedial building works required:** to address poor ventilation that cannot be completed before the end of February 2022. Air cleaning units may be suitable while remedial work is undertaken to address the underlying ventilation issue; they should not be used as a substitute for ventilation.
- ✓ **Suitable space:** air cleaning units will be allocated for **teaching spaces only (or childcare spaces in early years settings)**. We will not provide units for non-teaching rooms such as staff rooms, halls, corridors and dining rooms.

We will prioritise spaces with the poorest ventilation to receive units based on criteria such as CO₂ readings and occupation density.

Eligibility criteria for a DfE-funded air cleaning unit: SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) settings

SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) settings including SEND units in mainstream schools that were not successful or did not apply in the first round of applications in November 2021 are eligible to apply in this round. The application form can be accessed [here](#).

These settings will be assessed against different criteria given their higher-than-average number of vulnerable pupils.

Before submitting an application for a funded air cleaning unit, the following criteria **must** be met:

- ✓ **Sustained high CO₂ readings:** there have been sustained high CO₂ readings (1500ppm or higher) for at least 1 week while the room is occupied, despite taking all measures possible to introduce ventilation with the current provisions, e.g. opening windows.
- ✓ **Lengthy remedial building works required:** in order to address poor ventilation that cannot be completed before the end of February 2022. Air cleaning units may be suitable while remedial work is undertaken to address the underlying ventilation issue; they should not be used as a substitute for ventilation.
- ✓ **Suitable space:** air cleaning units will be allocated for teaching spaces and staff rooms only. Other spaces, including but not limited to large halls, corridors and rooms used for 1:1 teaching, will not be eligible for a DfE-funded unit.

We will prioritise spaces with the poorest ventilation to receive units based on criteria such as CO₂ readings and occupation density.

Questions & Answers



Question: Is my setting eligible for a DfE-funded air cleaning unit?

All state funded schools (primary and secondary), FE colleges and early years settings can apply for a funded air cleaning unit if they meet strict eligibility criteria. Special and AP settings, including SEND units attached to mainstream units, that were not successful or did not apply during the first round are also eligible during this round. If your setting is not eligible for a funded unit, an online marketplace is available, enabling you to purchase units at a suitable specification and competitive price. The marketplace can be accessed [here](#).



Question: Is the eligibility criteria for all settings the same?

No. There are different criteria for SEND and AP settings due to the higher-than-average number of vulnerable pupils attending those settings. Eligibility criteria for mainstream settings is set out on page 4; the criteria for SEND and AP settings is on page 5.



Question: We have purchased air cleaning units through the online marketplace and think we would be eligible for a DfE-funded unit. Are we able to be reimbursed for the units we have purchased?

Settings that have purchased air cleaning units through the online marketplace and meet the eligibility criteria for a DfE-funded unit, will be reimbursed. Further information about the process for reimbursement will be provided in due course



Question: We have identified poor ventilation but do not know whether an air cleaning unit would be suitable, how do we decide?

Air cleaning units can help reduce airborne contaminants in a poorly ventilated space. They should only be used while remedial work is undertaken to address the underlying ventilation issue. They are not a substitute for ventilation and should never be used as a reason to reduce or not remediate poor ventilation in the long term. It is for settings to decide whether an air cleaning unit would be suitable in line with their individual risk assessments. In making that decision, factors such as the size, occupancy and purpose of the room where you have identified poor ventilation should be considered. Guidance on how to improve ventilation can be found in the [Health and Safety Executive's \(HSE\) guidance](#) for workplaces, and links to further ventilation guidance are available [here](#).



Question: What should we do if ventilation cannot be improved through remedial work?

Air cleaning units may be suitable while remedial work is undertaken to address the underlying ventilation issue; they should not be used as a substitute for ventilation. It is the responsibility of settings to decide on the use of affected rooms in accordance with their risk assessment procedures and obligations under health and safety law. Guidance on how to improve ventilation can be found in the [Health and Safety Executive's \(HSE\) guidance](#) for workplaces, and links to further ventilation guidance are available [here](#).

Contact information and further guidance

1

Should you have any queries about eligibility for a DfE-funded air cleaning unit, please contact the **DfE coronavirus helpline**

Telephone: 0800 046 8687

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

Saturday to Sunday, 10am to 6pm

[Find out about call charges](#)

2

DfE guidance on CO₂ monitors is available here:

[How to guide for using CO₂ monitors](#)

3

DfE guidance on how to use air cleaning units is available here:

[How to guide for using air cleaning units](#)

4

For comprehensive advice on how to improve ventilation in your setting, please consult the following guidance:

- The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) guidance for workplaces on [ventilation and air conditioning during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#)
- The United Kingdom Health Security Agency's (UKHSA) guidance on [ventilation of indoor spaces to stop the spread of coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) [ventilation guidance](#)
- [Operational guidance](#) for your sector
- The [contingency framework for education and childcare settings](#).

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