

## **LEARNER SUPPORT FUND POLICY (Bursaries)**

### **Purpose & Scope**

The college recognises that students may need advice and assistance regarding financial issues related to their learning. The aim of this policy is to ensure that students are aware of and have access to advice and assistance when appropriate and according to their individual needs.

### **Policy Statement**

In line with the College's Mission and the requirement of Funding Bodies, the aim of this policy is to ensure the best possible provision of financial support to all learners at Furness College. The fund will support students on an individual needs basis who have a low household income.

Learner will be any person enrolled on a College course:

- "Learner Support Funds" will be the amount of money available to the College to help learners, on ESFA Funded courses, who may be in need of financial support to enable them to complete their course. This will take the form of bursary and other discretionary payments.
- "Childcare Funds" will be the amount of money available for the specific purpose of assisting with the financing of childcare costs for students over 20 years old on the date they start their College course.

### **SPECIFIC APPLICATIONS**

The primary priority for discretionary Learner Support Fund is to provide exceptional support to students aged 16 and above, who are economically and/or socially disadvantaged and are experiencing financial difficulty with meeting costs associated with learning at the College according to their individual need. The college uses Learner Support Funds to increase learner access, retention, achievement and the progression and employability chances of its learners. This support may take the form of a bursary and other discretionary payments on an individual needs assessed basis.

The threshold for eligibility for 16-19 Bursary payments is household income of £30,500 or below. In exceptional circumstances learners can apply for additional monies which will be assessed on an individual case by case basis.

### **Criteria and Eligibility**

- all learners must be aged 16 or over at 1st September of the academic year of application
- attending a full or part time ESFA funded course of Further Education;
- making satisfactory progress as agreed with the Curriculum Teams;
- meet the current residency criteria set out in the [ESFA funding regulations](#) for post-16 provision and therefore qualify for Bursary fund eligibility.

### **Exercising Entitlement to other Forms of Financial Support**

Learners should exercise their entitlement to other forms of financial support before they pursue an application for discretionary learner support. In summary they comprise:

- Universal Credit (UC)/Income Support (IS)
- Residential Support Scheme/Housing Benefit
- Care to Learn (C2L)
- Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work
- Tax Credit (childcare element)
- Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children
- Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

However, receipt of other forms of financial support may not be a pre-condition, or an exclusion factor, for the receipt of Learner Support Funds, as the funds will be allocated on an individual needs assessed basis.

### Priority Groups

The College will give particular priority to learners who are economically and/or socially disadvantaged. For 16-19 year olds this includes those who need support for general hardship, transport costs in term time for timetabled learning sessions, College meals, equipment for learning at College, support for short term Industry Placement costs and are facing financial difficulty. Support will be given on an individual needs basis.

### Vulnerable Groups

The 16-19 Bursary fund provides individual needs assessed funding for vulnerable learners, the defined vulnerable groups are: those in care, recent care leavers, those receiving Income Support/Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves or have dependents, those receiving DLA or PIP in their own right combined with ESA or UC in their own right.

Hardship payments will be assessed on an individual basis for those learners who need additional financial support. 16-19 hardship funding is not to displace support arrangements already provided for through national policy or legislation.

### 19+ Priorities

- those in care or recently left care
- those on Universal Credit (UC)/Income Support (IS)
- those on DLA and ESA

For those students aged 19+ this includes those who need support for general hardship, transport, childcare (for learners aged 20+) or associated learning costs and are facing financial difficulty.

### Advanced Learner Loan Priorities

- Those in receipt of an Advanced Learner Loan with a household income of £30,500 or less.

### Childcare Funds

The College will consider funding childcare provided learners have exercised their entitlement to other forms of financial support. This will only be for learners 20 years or over. Care to Learn will be available for all other learners under 20 years old.

Learner Support Fund may only be used to fund childcare that is Ofsted registered. When making awards of childcare support, the College will not exceed the maximum weekly amount as laid down by government for Care to Learn, currently £180 a week per child.

**This policy/procedure has been reviewed regarding the requirement for an Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment and a Privacy Impact Assessment.**

**At this stage it is felt that a full impact or privacy assessment is unnecessary as the College public duty has been discharged through a related policy/procedure or there is no current requirement**

Document Control		Linked Policies/Strategies	Linked Procedures
Policy	Learner Support Fund	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies	Admissions Pastoral Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures
Responsibility	Director of Student Journey		
Approval Date	June 2025		
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Approval Group	SLT	LE Committee	

