



19+ Discretionary Learner Support Policy 2023/24

Author(s): Executive Team Members Responsible for HE and Admissions

Approved: 27 June 023 (Resources Committee)

Review: June 2024

19+ Learner Support Fund Policy 2023/24 **(Including Advanced Learner Loan Bursary)**

What is the 19+ Learner Support Fund?

The 19+ Learner Support Fund is available to learners aged 19+ (19 as of 31st August 2023), that have a total household income of less than £30,000 per year. The 19+ Learner Support Fund supports learners in full time/part time* further education by providing a contribution towards the cost of attending College such as travel, uniform and childcare.

*Part time refers to a course with hours equivalent to one College day (7 hours) or more.

19+ learners with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), or learners continuing on a study programme which began when aged 16-18, will need to refer to the 16-19 Bursary Fund Policy.

To be eligible applicants must:

- Be an enrolled student on a course funded by Education Skills Funded Agency (ESFA) or funded by an Advanced Learner Loan
- Be aged 19+ on 31st August 2023
- Have *home student* status or have been granted full *refugee/asylum seeker* status
- Have been *ordinary resident* in the UK continuously for the last three years with *settled status* which means having indefinite leave to remain
- Have a household income, including means-tested benefits, of less than £30,000 per year. Housing benefit is not included when assessing this.

Who can't apply?

Students will not be eligible for the 19+ LSF if they are:

- Receiving student finance for higher education
- Studying on a community learning course

What support is available?

We can provide assistance for the costs of:

- Travel
- Essential course uniform and equipment
- iPad deposit (if required for course)
- Childcare

Travel support is only issued to students living over 1 mile from the College. This is worked out using [zeemaps.com](https://www.zeemaps.com) to create a 1 mile radius circle.

The amount of funding students are eligible to receive is dependent on several factors including the total household income and course attending.

A maximum total award cap is set at £1000 (full-time courses) and £500 (part-time courses)* excluding childcare. Uniform and equipment costs will vary depending on the course and some courses have no essential uniform or equipment.

* Discretionary bursary payments above the maximum may be available under exceptional circumstances

Childcare is set in line with the maximum funding provided by Care to Learn.

What support is available for Childcare?

Please note that if students are aged 19 and under on 31st August 2023 they will be required to apply for Care to Learn for help with childcare costs.

Students aged 20+ can apply to the 19+ Learner Support Fund/ Learner Loan Bursary for support towards childcare costs. This is a limited fund and students must meet the eligibility criteria and maintain a minimum of 80% attendance. A maximum contribution of £180 per week per student applies on a full-time course, or a maximum contribution of £90 per week per student applies on a part-time course (if their child is entitled to receive a Nursery Education Grant those hours must be used in the first instance and declared on the application form, therefore funding amounts will be reduced).

Current Government policy states that 3 to 4-year-olds in England can receive 570 hours of free early education or childcare per year. Some 2-year-olds are also eligible. Visit <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs> to find out more. Please note that students are expected to secure their Nursery Education Grant prior to applying to the College 19+ Learner Support Fund.

Learner Loan Bursary (Advanced Learner Loan)

In addition to meeting the criteria for the 19+ LSF, students who have applied and have been approved for an Advanced Learner Loan, or are eligible for Level 3 Entitlement funding will be entitled to a maintenance grant as additional support.

The maintenance grant will be based on an individual assessment.

A maximum bursary award of £1,000* will apply to students on a full-time programme of study. A maximum bursary award of £500* will apply to students on a part-time programme of study.

* Discretionary bursary payments above the maximum may be available under exceptional circumstances

How do students apply?

Once enrolled on a course at Harlow College for 2023/2024, students can apply for financial support. To apply, students must complete and submit an online application form and upload the required evidence (see table below). A link to apply will be sent by the Bursary team **prior to enrolment.**

For childcare assistance, an additional childcare application form will be required to be completed by the learner and childcare provider. A birth certificate must be provided for each child along with the OFSTED registration number from the childcare provider.

Please note that students must have evidence of eligibility in order to apply.

What evidence can students provide to support their Bursary application?

Name of Income / Benefit	Evidence Needed (photocopies accepted)
*Tax Credit Award	All pages of most recent Tax Credit Award Notice dated tax year 2023/24
Income Support	Letter confirming benefit (no more than 3 months old)
Employment Support Allowance Income Based (ESA)	Letter confirming benefit (no more than 3 months old)
Universal Credit	Last 3 months' worth of statements in full
Job Seekers Allowance Income Based (JSA)	Letter confirming benefit (no more than 3 months old)
Pension Credit	Letter confirming benefit (no more than 3 months old)
ESA or UC plus DLA or PIP (vulnerable bursary)	Letter confirming benefit (no more than 3 months old)

What happens next?

We will write to the students to advise them what support they are entitled to and how this will be provided. If their application is not successful or further information is required they will be notified in writing.

How will students be paid?

- The uniform and equipment will be ordered directly through the College, where possible.
- Childcare payments will be made directly to the childcare providers
- Travel awards are provided in the form of a bus pass where appropriate.
- The maintenance grant is paid on a monthly basis and the first payment is paid to every eligible student who applies and meets the criteria specified. All following payments are dependent on their attendance and behaviour. All students **MUST** have a minimum monthly attendance of 80% to receive each payment.

Payments are paid directly into the bank account stated on the application.

The College reserves the right to make discretionary awards in exceptional circumstances.

Can students appeal against the College's decision?

In the event that a complainant is dissatisfied with the decision taken by the College, and decides to appeal, a member of the Executive will review the decision and will carry out any further investigation deemed necessary. They will decide to either endorse or modify the decision, and will inform the complainant accordingly. The complainant must appeal (in writing) within 15 working days of receiving their decision.

TRACKING and REFERENCE INFORMATION

Date Approved: 27 June 2023 (Resources Committee)

Next Review Date: June 2024 (annually)

Author/Responsibility: Vice-Principal with Responsibility for Admissions and Finance

Equality Impact Assessment: N/A

List of related policies, procedures and other documents:

Complaints Procedure
Equality & Diversity Policy
Equality and Diversity Scheme
Data Protection Policy
Safeguarding Policy

Complaints: If you wish to submit a complaint about the application of this policy or the procedure of it, please send your request in accordance with the provisions of the Grievance Procedure.

Monitoring: The application of this policy and associated procedure will be monitored by Vice-Principal with Responsibility for Admissions and Finance

Easy reading: To receive this policy/procedure in a different format, please contact: HR Services