

Student Bursary and Discretionary Financial Support Policy and Procedures 2023.24

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of the financial support funds is to provide support to students at the College who face the greatest barriers to continuing in education or training post-16. The Funds look to provide support to those students who are experiencing financial difficulty in meeting costs associated with learning, these include but not limited to travel, childcare, essential equipment/trips, where applicable, course fees, free meals and hardship payments, where there is no alternative scheme to provide financial support.

The following sections identify the funding made available through the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

- s2.The 16-19 Discretionary and Bursary Funds
 - s3.Free Meals
 - s4.Adult Learning Support Fund
 - s5.Advanced Learning Loans Bursary (Student Loans)
- 1.2 The ESFA and DfE publishes guidance, which set out the criteria for financial support to help students facing financial hardship through the 16-19 Bursary Fund including the discretionary element, the Adult Discretionary Learner Support Fund and the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary.

Institutions are responsible for identifying young people who are eligible for financial support.

Institutions are free to determine which students should receive a discretionary award, subject to the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010 and meeting the funding criteria outlined in the following sections.

Eligibility of Individual Funding Schemes, sections 2 to 5

2. 16-19 Bursary Fund

- 2.1 To be eligible for the bursary students must:
- be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2023 or
 - be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2023 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
 - be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2023 and continuing on the (same) study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers')
 - meet the residency criteria in (Education and Skills Funding Agency) ESFA academic year funding regulations for post-16 provision
 - be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality (such as Ofsted), the provision must also be either;
 - funded directly by ESFA or by ESFA via a local authority
 - otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including Level 3) accredited by Ofqual or pursuant to Section 96 or the Learning and Skills Act 2000
 - a 16 to 19 traineeship programme

- non employed students aged 16-19 who are participating in a Prince's Trust Team Programme
- be able to evidence hardship
- Be living with a parent/guardian as a dependant, whose household income (joint) is less than £30,000 gross

2.2 Disadvantage is defined by the students being in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit (UC has replaced Income Support (IS) and income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit) and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- during the initial roll out of the benefit, Universal Credit

2.3 The following students are **ineligible** to receive any assistance though the 16-19 Bursary Fund:

- Students on Higher Education courses (Level 4 and above), with the exception of those participating in access courses or HE falling within paragraph 1 (g) of schedule 6 to the Education Reform Act 1988, provided courses are funded by the EFA
- Young people on Waged Training or Apprenticeships. (In exceptional circumstances support can be claimed through the Adult Fund)
- Students in Prison or a young offender institution or who have been released on temporary licence (ROTL), for example, on a day release.

Institutions should take account of any other sources of financial support received by a young person when deciding whether to award a bursary.

2.4 Accompanied asylum seeking children (under 18 with an adult relative or partner)

Generally, asylum seekers are not entitled to public funds. Accompanied asylum seeking children (i.e. those under 18 with an adult relative or partner) and those aged 18 and above are entitled to education, but not to public funds. If they are destitute they can apply to the Home Office for suitable housing and cash for essentials, but they are not eligible for other income.

As long as an asylum seeker has not had their application refused, institutions can provide in kind student support such as course related books, equipment or a travel pass. Under no circumstances should an institution give cash to any asylum seeker who is not an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (UASC).

2.5 Unaccompanied asylum seeking children

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children do not receive cash support from the Home Office and are the responsibility of the local authority. They are treated as looked after children and are eligible for a vulnerable bursary ('in care' group).

When these young people reach legal adulthood at age 18, institutions must consider their immigration status. If the asylum claim is decided in their favour, the local authority

must provide them with the same support and services as they do care leavers. As such, they continue to be eligible for a vulnerable bursary until they reach the upper age limit.

Where an asylum claim is not supported, the individual may not be able to stay legally in the UK. When asylum claims have been fully heard and the appeals rights exhausted, an individual has no entitlement to public funds (with a few exceptions because the withdrawal of support would be seen as a breach of human rights).

2.6 Elements of the 16-19 Bursary Fund

The 16-19 Bursary Fund has two elements:

1. Vulnerable Bursary of £1200 award. To be eligible for the vulnerable bursary, students must be in one of the defined vulnerable groups:

- in care: (looked after by a local authority on a voluntary basis (section 20 of the Children Act 1989) or under a care order (section 31 of the Children Act 1989)
- care leavers: (16-17 who was previously looked after for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks) which began after the age of 14 and after the age of 16; or 18 or over who was looked after prior to becoming 18 for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods of amounting to 13 weeks) which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16)
- foster, including privately arranged foster care: placed with a foster carer by the local authority, including where the foster carer is on the books of an independent fostering agency (classed as looked after)
- special guardianship order: has been in the care of the local authority and the care transferred to another party via a permanent form of fostering and must meet the definition of care leaver in full (so, the period of weeks and age range set out above)
- receiving Universal Credit (UC has replaced Income Support (IS) and income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)) because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner
- receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right

** Unaccompanied minors in the care of the Local Authority should be supported to open a bank account in order to receive bursary payments.*

2. Discretionary Bursary award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment for students whose family is in receipt of benefits and/or low household income, criteria applies.

3. Free Meals

3.1 Students must be enrolled in further education provision funded via ESFA to be eligible for a free meal. Eligible institutions are:

- general further education colleges, including specialist colleges
- sixth-form colleges
- commercial and charitable providers
- higher education institutions (HEIs) with 16 to 19 funding from ESFA
- specialist post-16 institutions (SPIs)
- local authorities (LAs) and FE institutions directly funded for 16 to 19

- 16 to 18 traineeship providers
- European Social Fund (ESF) only institutions
- 16 to 19 only academies and free schools
- 16 to 19 only maintained schools

3.2 Eligibility for Free meals

Age - To be eligible to receive a free meal in the 2023 to 2024 academic year a student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2023.

Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a free meal if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers') or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

These two groups of aged 19 plus students can receive a free meal while they continue to attend education (in the case of a 19+ continuer, this must be the same programme they started before they turned 19), as long as their eligibility continues.

The following groups of students are not eligible for free meals in further education:

- students aged between 14 and 16 (these students are already covered by free school meals (FSM) provision)
- students aged 19 or over at the start of their study programme, unless they have an EHCP or are a 19+ continuer
- apprentices, including those with an EHCP

3.3 Free meals are targeted at disadvantaged students. Free meals in further education defines disadvantage as students being in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit (UC has replaced Income Support (IS) and income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA))
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit)
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit

A student is only eligible to receive a free meal when they, or a responsible adult on their behalf, have made a successful application to the institution where they are enrolled.

4. Adult Learning Support Funds

4.1 Eligibility for funding

To be eligible to apply for the adult discretionary funds, the learner must:

- Be aged 19 yrs. or over on the 1st September 2023
- Satisfy the residency criteria outlined in the ESFA's Funding Rules 2023-24

- Be studying on a programme funded by the Adult Skill Agency up to and including a first full Level 3 (If you are aged 19 or over and in receipt of an Advanced Learning Loan you can apply for support through the Advanced Learning Loan (ALL) Bursary)
- Be from a household receiving means-tested benefits (income support, income based job seekers allowance, pension credit, (guaranteed credit), employment support allowance (Universal Credit))
- Be living independently or with a spouse/partner and have a household income paid through employment of less than £30,000 gross
- Be living with a parent/guardian as a dependant, whose household income (joint) is less than £30,000 gross

4.2 Assessment of low income of £30,000 gross and below is carried out by using evidence of Working Tax credit award notice, P60, P45, or the last 6 months wage slip

4.3 Exceptions

Providers must not use the fund as a means of support where the Learner is:

- Eligible and it is more appropriate, for them to receive support through the Additional Learning Support for the same purpose.
- Already receiving travel or expenses funding through DWP
- In prison or a young offender institution or who has been released on temporary license (ROTL), for example, on day release.
- Undertaking a higher education course. Students participating in HE access courses or courses of HE falling within paragraph 1(g) or 1(h) of schedule 6 to the Education Reform Act 1998 will be eligible to apply for DLS funding, providing the course are funded through the Adult Skills Budget.
- Aged over 19 years studying on a level 3 qualification which is funded by an Advanced Learning Loan

4.4 Residency Requirement - In addition to meeting the criteria outlined in paragraph 4.1 & 4.2 students must also satisfy the residency criteria and be one of the following:

- Have been a UK or EU/EEA national for the past 3 years
- Has '*settled status*' in the UK
- Has been granted refugee status or Humanitarian Protection
- The husband, wife, civil partner, parent, step-parent, son-in-law, daughter-in-law or child's civil partner of a EEA who is working or looking for work in the UK
- The husband, wife, civil partner, parent or step-parent of someone who has been granted Humanitarian Protection (and were at the time of their asylum application)

4.5 They have lived in the UK for six months or longer while their claim is being considered by the Home Office, and no decision on their claim has been made, or;

they are in the care of the local authority and are receiving local authority support under section 23C or section 23CA of the Children Act 1989 or section 21 of the National Assistance Act 1948.

4.6 Asylum seekers and the dependants of Asylum seekers can access the fund providing they have not had their application refused in which case they can access the fund for course related books, equipment and travel.

Under no circumstance can cash payments be made.

4.7 An individual who has been refused asylum will be eligible if:

- they have appealed against a decision made by the UK government against granting refugee status and no decision has been made within six months of lodging the appeal, or;
- they are granted support for themselves under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, or;
- they are in the care of a local authority and are receiving local authority support for themselves under section 23C or section 23CA of the Children Act 1989.

4.8 Priority Groups

There are certain groups of learners who are ESFA priorities because they are 'at particular risk' from not being able to engage in education. These are identified as:

- Those in care or leaving care
- Those on probation
- Learners with learning difficulties/disabilities

4.9 Priorities for funding

Funding will be focused on course related costs such as:

- Exceptionally for travel costs
- Childcare costs for those aged 20 and over
- Essential course related equipment and books
- Emergency and hardship assistance
- Essential course trips
- Exceptionally for fees
- Exam and professional registration costs
- College registration

5. **Advanced Learning Loans Bursary**

Eligibility for funding

5.1 To be eligible to apply for support from the Advanced Learning Loans Bursary;

- In receipt of a means tested benefits/ low household income £30,000 gross.
- Have been granted an Advanced Learning Loan.
- Be aged 19 years or older at the start of the learning and satisfy the residency criteria outlined in the ESFA's Funding rules and below:
 - a UK national, or someone with *settled status, but you live somewhere else in the [European Economic Area \(EEA\)](#)
 - an EU national or a family member of one
 - not a UK national but you've lived in the UK for at least 20 years (or at least half of your life)
 - a refugee
 - a migrant worker
 - the child of a Swiss national
 - the child of a Turkish worker
 - under humanitarian protection or a relative of someone who has been granted it.

**If you have indefinite leave to remain in the UK, this must have been granted before the start of your course. You must also have been living in the UK for 3 years prior to the start of your course.*

From 1 August 2017, you may also qualify if you are not resident in the UK but you are a serving member of the UK armed forces (or their spouse, civil partner or a dependent parent living with them).

- Must be studying on a level 3-6 qualification funded by the Education Funding Skills Agency
- Demonstrate financial hardship-evidence of income/means benefits is required.

5.2 The following learners are **ineligible** to receive any assistance through the bursary fund:

- Students studying qualifications lower than level 3
- Students on Higher Education courses
- Students who have not applied for an Advanced Learning Loan (ALL)
- Students studying on programmes costing less than £300

5.3 Condition of awards

The ALL bursary subject to availability and may not cover all costs. The college will prioritise additional learning support in line with the College's duty under the Equalities Act 2010 Students who require **additional learning support must have an assessment with Student Engagement before enrolling onto a programme to assess additional learning support requirements.**

5.4 In line with the guidelines set out by the ESFA funding guidance, the college is required to determine criteria in order for learners to access the bursary fund. All funding is subject to availability and is made on a first come first serve basis.

5.5 Only students who have applied for a/and have been awarded an Advanced Learning Loan (ALL) to pay for course fees can be considered for an ALL bursary award.

5.6 In exceptional circumstances, the college reserves the right to make awards to individual students who do not necessarily meet all the listed criteria.

6. Supporting Principles

6.1 Budget for the discretionary and advanced learner loan funding is finite; students who are eligible for support are not automatically entitled to it with the exception of the 16-19 Vulnerable Bursary.

6.2 All students must meet the individual criteria set out in the ESFA and DfE guidelines to receive assistance from the funds.

6.3 Awards will be conditional on the learner meeting standards set by the College in terms of their attendance, progress, behaviour and conduct.

6.4 Students should exercise their eligibility to other forms of financial support. However, receipt of other forms of learner support is neither a pre-condition, nor an exclusion factor, for the receipt of the discretionary funds.

6.5 All equipment remains the property of the College. Where practical, students will be asked to return equipment at the end of their course. Students who withdraw from the

College may be asked to either return their bus pass / equipment, or reimburse the College.

- 6.6 All students will be asked to provide proof of income, household income, and income benefits awarded, written confirmation of current or previous looked-after status and residency.
- 6.7 Students have the right to appeal only in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances consist of the following, appeal due to a medical condition, disability or safeguarding concern. To appeal the learner or a member of staff must complete an appeal form. The appeal will be presented to a Funding Appeal Panel consisting of a number of relevant managers. The Director of Student Engagement will chair the meeting. In all cases, the outcome of the appeal will be notified in writing, within 10 working days.

7. Policy Implementation

- 7.1 The Policy and guidance is updated annually in accordance with the ESFA Guidelines.
- 7.2 Funding allocations are managed at the discretion of the College and are subject to availability with the exception of the 16-19 Vulnerable Bursary.
- 7.3 All students and staff will be informed of the fund through College publications, intranet and inductions to their learning programme.
- 7.4 The purpose of the award made, is identified at the time of allocation. A student in receipt of welfare benefits e.g. Universal Credit must declare if they have received payments from the bursary fund.
- 7.5 All students must complete an application form and submit it with the appropriate evidence to a member of the Student Engagement Team.
- 7.6 Students should exercise their entitlement to other forms of financial support before they pursue an application to receive funding, in line with the ESFA Guidelines.
- 7.7 Funding will be allocated to students for the duration of the course and is dependent on eligibility, good attendance, behaviour and progress. Where there is a cause for concern, the tutor and learner will be informed and appropriate steps taken to support the learner to avoid the withdrawal of funding.

8. Responsibilities

- 8.1 The Fund is administered and monitored by the Student Engagement Division.
- 8.2 All staff has a responsibility for ensuring that students are made aware of support provided by the College in relation to financial support.

9. Equality and Diversity

- 9.1 The College's commitment to equal opportunities and social inclusiveness is demonstrated through its determination that every learner receives the high quality learning experience, which will bring them success. All teaching and learning activities should incorporate differentiation techniques and a considered approach to each individual learner.

9.2 The College will ensure that all funds operate within the spirit and letter of the College Equality and Diversity Policy.

10. Safeguarding

10.1 The College will ensure that its policies promotes safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

11. Manager responsible for policy

Director of Student Engagement

12. Related Documents

Single Equality Scheme
Safeguarding Policy
Additional Support Policy

13. Date for Next Review

August 2024

Policy Change History

Version 6 October 2022 Revised for new academic year **Updated by** Donna Kelly
Version 7 September 2023 Revised for new academic year **Updated by** Donna Kelly

Appendix 1

Eligibility Criteria – Please note with the exception of the 16-19 Vulnerable Bursary, all funding is subject to availability and is awarded on a first come first serve basis. Students must meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the main policy. Please note all equipment remains the property of the College.

80% minimum attendance (or lower if the college target is set lower) requirement

16-19 Vulnerable Bursary

Vulnerable Bursary

- Bursary up to £1200 which is split by travel, books and equipment and any other items needed to access study as detailed:
 - £200 award toward transport costs from £1200 (remainder of cost awarded from 16-19 Bursary)
 - All receive Bus Pass (or equivalent contribution to the costs of Rail Pass if live over 2 miles from campus of study).
 - Maximum £100 award toward essential books & equipment (as agreed by curriculum) from £1200 (remainder of cost awarded from 16-19 Bursary)
- Maximum £900 award towards additional items needed to access study subject to assessment of financial needs and distributed by weekly payments

Taxi

- Taxi on grounds of learning difficulty/disability and medical grounds based on not receiving higher mobility allowance

Trips and Visits

- Essential trips ie without the trip, qualification cannot be achieved

Free meals

- Free meals support (awarded from 16-19 Bursary) will be entitled to one free per day of programme. Learners will access meals via their ID Badge.

Childcare

- Please ask for information on Care to Learn

16-19 Discretionary Fund

Travel

- Must be on full time programme of 11 hours or more and more than 1 term
- Termly Swift card for living 2 miles
- Out of area, adult rail travel
- All 16-18s will be given Swift Card/Rail (meets criteria)
- Must not be claiming higher rate mobility through DWP

Travel to Industry Placements

- House hold income less than £30,000
- Lives more than 2 miles from the placement
- Cost covered for the number of days travelling to the placement using MTicket/Day saver

Taxi

- Taxi on grounds of learning difficulty/disability and medical grounds based on not receiving higher mobility allowance

Equipment

- Essential equipment eg hairdressing uniforms, ppe etc. Monies transferred directly into curriculum budgets (No refunds)

Industry Placements Equipment

- Essential equipment could be provided if necessary for the placement. Curriculum to identify this.

Trips and Visits

- Essential trips ie without the trip, qualification cannot be met - agreed at curriculum level eg Sports, Travel & Tourism, Public Services).

Emergency/Hardship Fund

- Students can apply up to 3 times a year to the maximum of £500.00 for the academic year to help with urgent and emergency issues such as being made homeless, loss of income or benefits or serious domestic issues.
- In addition, the students must attend an appointment with a Guidance/welfare officer and an assessment of need should be carried out. Up to £150 authorised by Assistant Director Student Engagement. Over £150, authorised by Director/and or Deputy.
- Emergency payments of £50 maximum can be awarded up to 3 times a year, authorised by SE managers.

Adult Discretionary Fund

Travel

- Must be on full time programme of 11 hours or more than 1 term
- Termly Swift card for living 2 miles
- Out of area, adult rail travel
- Must not be claiming higher rate mobility through DWP

Travel to Industry Placements

- Short courses, 6-10 weeks, sector based programmes with industry placements
- House hold income less than £30,000
- Lives more than 2 miles from the placement
- Cost covered for the number of days travelling to the placement using MTicket/Day saver

Taxi

- Taxi on grounds of learning difficulty/disability and medical grounds based on not receiving higher mobility allowance

Equipment

- Essential Equipment eg hairdressing uniforms, ppe etc. Monies transferred directly into curriculum budgets (No refunds)

Trips and Visits

- Essential trips ie without the trip, qualification cannot be met - agreed at curriculum level eg Sports, Travel & Tourism, Public Services).

Emergency/Hardship Fund

- Students can apply up to 3 times a year to the maximum of £500.00 the academic year to help with urgent and emergency issues such as being made homeless, loss of income or benefits or serious domestic issues.
- In addition, the students must attend an appointment with a Guidance/welfare officer and an assessment of need should be carried out. Student Engagement Director/and or Deputy to authorise
- Emergency payments of £50 maximum can be awarded up to 3 times a year

Childcare

- The Fund will contribute up to a maximum of £50 a day towards the cost of 1 child per household per student.
- **Students aged 20 years and above are eligible when studying up to and including a first level 3 qualification**
- **Students can only use Nursery provision, Child Minding or before/after school childcare that is Ofsted registered and is graded Excellent or Good (grade 2 or above).**

- Students **must not** commit themselves to any expenditure until funding has been confirmed in writing.
- The fund will only pay for days a student attends college or unpaid placements which are part of their programme of study.
- The college/fund is not responsible for paying any deposits or notice periods. And does not pay holiday periods
- For students falling below the college's target for attendance of 100% funding could be removed

Fees

- Household income less than £30,000
- Payment of 100%

Advanced Learning Loan Bursary (Adult Learning Loan Bursary)

Students must have their fees loan agreed before applying for an award

Travel

- Must be on full time programme of 11 hours or more than 1 term
- Termly Swift card for living 2 miles
- Out of area, adult rail travel
- Travel costs to attend interviews
- Must not be claiming higher rate mobility through DWP

Taxi

- Taxi on grounds of learning difficulty/disability and medical grounds based on not receiving higher mobility allowance

Equipment

- Essential equipment eg hairdressing uniforms, ppe etc. Monies transferred directly into curriculum budgets (No refunds). Laptop, cost of UCAS application

Trips and Visits

- Essential trips ie without the trip, qualification cannot be achieved
- Visits to Universities

Clothing Allowance

- An allowance of £150.00 is provided for Interviews

Childcare

- The Fund will pay £50.00 per day per child/household per student for 2 children and up to a maximum of £500 per week
- Students can only use Nursery provision that is Ofsted registered and is graded Excellent or Good (grade 2 or above).
- Students **must not** commit themselves to any expenditure until funding has been confirmed in writing.
- The fund will only pay for days a student attends college or unpaid placements which are part of their programme of study.
- The college/fund is not responsible for paying any deposits or notice periods. And does not pay holiday periods

Trips

The discretionary Learner Support Fund can be used to fund costs for residential / field trips that are **essential** to the course, **identified as part of the curriculum** and are **subject to available**

funds. All tutors must complete the relevant application form and provide copies of quotes before funding is granted. Where possible, this should be identified by curriculum during planning.

All overseas trips need to be identified on the CMF and approval must be granted by a senior manager before being eligible for dLSF funding.

The cost of staffing for learners in receipt of additional learning support who attend residential must have it agreed in advance with the Director of Student Engagement and must be considered as part of the planning/budget process.

All monies are transferred into Divisional dLSF budgets, the tutor/organiser is then emailed to notify them of the amount transferred, budget code and a list of all students who have received funding

Emergency Fund / DaySaver

Students who meet the eligibility criteria for the 16-19 Bursary Fund can apply to a Guidance officer or a Student Engagement Manager for an emergency payment, meal voucher or Day saver. Students must complete a 16-19 Bursary Application.

A maximum payment up to £50 can be granted in any one instance to help students in an emergency. A petty cash requisition must be completed and signed by the Assistant Director for Student Engagement (or a Senior Manager in the absence of the Assistant Director).

Emergency Travel

Students who are identified in crisis can be awarded up to three daysavers. They will need to present themselves to a Welfare/Guidance Officer based in Student Engagement who will assess the needs and arrange for an appointment to discuss further support as appropriate.

Hardship Fund

Students can apply for a maximum of £500 over the academic year to help with urgent and emergency issues such as being made homeless, loss of income or benefits or serious domestic issues. A student can apply up to three times within the academic year.

All Students must qualify for the dLSF and have completed a dLSF form to receive hardship payments.

****Additional payments may be awarded at the discretion of the Student Engagement Director***

In all circumstances, the student will be informed of the outcome.

Meal Vouchers

Following a guidance appointment, students who are identified as 'in crisis' may be awarded meal vouchers to be used in the College canteens. A maximum of up to five can be awarded.

Free meals

Learners who meet the free meals funding criteria will be entitled to one free per day. Learners will access meals via their ID Badge.

Eligibility for funding;

To be eligible to receive free meals, the learner must:

- Be aged 16 to 18 years of age on the 31st August 2023 (including students on ESFA programmes).
- Be aged 19-24 and subject to a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) or Education Health and Care Plan.
- Or ESFA students between 16-18 on 31st August 2023 are eligible whilst attending their provision and if they meet the eligibility criteria.
- Satisfy the residency criteria outlined in the ESFA Funding Guidance 2023-24 Funding Regulations.
- Be attending general further education colleges including specialist colleges.
- Be funded by the ESFA either directly or via the local authority (this includes ESFA tendered 'zero' funded provision ;or
- Be funded or co-funded by the European Social Fund; or otherwise publicly funded and leading to a qualification (up to level 3) that is accredited by Ofqual or is pursuant to Section 98 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.
- Be classified as a vulnerable young person or facing a significant financial barrier to participation.
- Be defined as being financially disadvantaged.

Disadvantage is defined by the students being in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit (UC has replaced Income Support (IS) and income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit) and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 for each year (after tax and not including any benefits they get)