

**DISCRETIONARY
LEARNING SUPPORT
FUND
GUIDELINES FOR
19+LEARNERS**

2017/18

DISCRETIONARY LEARNER SUPPORT FUND – Guidelines for learners

Introduction

This guide aims to provide information and guidance for those learners over the age of 19 who are applying for funding from dLSF. Please take the time to read the information in this booklet before filling in the application form. This booklet details who is eligible for Discretionary Learner Support, what support you may be able to receive and how to apply.

What is Discretionary Learner Support?

dLSF are government monies which are administered by the College to assist learners who are facing specific financial hardship that prevents them from participating in learning. dLSF is made up of two parts:

1. 19+ Hardship

This support is available to assist students who qualify with the costs of travel and course-related costs such as books and equipment, tuition fees (in exceptional circumstances), assistance in a sudden crisis.

2. 20+ Childcare

This fund is available to assist learners over the age of 20 years with the costs of childcare whilst studying at college.

If you are a young parent, under 20 years old you could get help with your childcare payments through Care to Learn. Contact 0800 121 8989 or visit the website www.education.gov.uk

Who will be eligible to apply for DLSF?

- Adult Learners who are 19-23 on the 31 August 2017, studying a level 3 or 4 course funded by the Skills Funding Agency (but not by a loan)
- Adult Learners aged 24 or more studying an entry level, level 1 or level 2 course funded by the Skills Funding Agency.
- Learners who meet the residency requirements.
- Learners providing evidence of low household (gross) income per annum

The following learners are **not** eligible to apply

- Those on waged apprenticeships, except in exceptional circumstances
- Learners on an adult and community learning course
- Learners over 19 years taking a course where fees can be paid for using an Advanced Learning Loan
- Learners choosing to pay fees themselves

Is DSL Means Tested?

Yes, both the 19+ Hardship fund and 20+ Childcare Fund are means tested. The thresholds are shown below.

Family with children	Under £30,000
Couple	Under £21,000
Single	Under £16,000

Please note that learners living with parents will be assessed on family/household income.

What support will I get?

The amount and type of support you receive from the 19+ Hardship support, will be specific to your needs and circumstances. Financial assistance will be available to help learners with:

- Travel Costs
- Equipment
- Books
- Other course related costs
- Childcare costs
- Tuition fees in exceptional circumstances
- Assistance in a sudden crisis

Which childcare provider do I use?

Learners over the age of 20 can apply for help towards OFSTED registered childcare up to a maximum of £175 per week, per child

Childcare is only payable for:

- The days when you are timetable to attend College
- Attending examinations

Payments for Childcare - We will contact your childcare provider to let them know that your fees are being paid by the LSF and we will ask them to invoice the College, we will then pay your child care provider directly.

The funds for childcare are strictly limited and will be distributed to those considered to be in the greatest need of help.

Are there any other conditions to receiving support from Discretionary Learner Support?

Expected attendance is 100% and for any student who falls below 85% attendance, financial support may reduce.

How do I apply for dLSF?

- Please complete an application form and provide all necessary evidence of income.
- Application forms are available from Reception or the Admissions office and on the College web-site.

What will happen next?

Assessments of fully completed application forms (with all supporting evidence attached) will commence in September 2016. Learners will be notified by letter about the outcome of their application within 4 weeks which will explain if your application is successful (or unsuccessful) and how your award will be paid.

How will I receive financial assistance?

The College can make payments directly into your bank/building society account using the BACs system. In some cases, the College will pay the costs directly.

You may receive travel saver tickets

Please note that you must show your **learner ID card** when collecting any cheques.

Please note that funds awarded must be declared if you are in receipt of Income Support/Universal Credit.

What should I do if I am not happy with the outcome of my application?

Students can appeal against the decision that has been made in relation to their application by writing to:

Associate Director - MIS & Admin
Cheadle & Marple College
Cheadle Road
Cheadle Hulme
Cheshire
SK8 5HA

Equality and Diversity

Cheadle & Marple Sixth Form College will:

1. Take positive action to ensure that all students can apply for financial support thus widening participation and providing learning opportunities for underrepresented groups.
2. Ensure that no applicant to the Fund receives less favourable treatment which cannot be justified in relation to financial/personal circumstances.
3. Ensure that all Bursary Fund literature, marketing and publicity material are free from stereotypes, discriminatory assumptions, images and language.
4. Monitor and review the effectiveness of the support on a regular basis.
5. Ensure that all literature regarding the fund is available in all formats if required.

Confidentiality

When data is provided to us, we use it solely for the purpose for which it was provided.

Fraudulent Claims

We request detailed information for dLSF applications and you are required to sign to confirm that the information you have provided is correct. If you are awarded funding on the basis of false information, you will be asked to repay any monies you were awarded.