



Education
Funding
Agency

2012/13 16-19 Bursary Fund Q&A for Providers and Local Authorities

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Introduction

This document is aimed at all providers who administer the 16-19 Bursary Fund. This includes schools (both maintained school sixth forms and non-maintained special schools), Academies, General FE Colleges, sixth form colleges, training providers, independent specialist providers and local authorities. These institutions are referred to as 'providers' throughout this document.

This Q&A replaces the 2011/12 version from 31 August 2012 and is designed to be read in conjunction with the *16-19 Bursary Fund Guide for 2012/13* and the *16-19 Bursary Fund Examples of Good Practice*. Together, they form a suite of documents to support providers and local authorities in administering the 16-19 Bursary Fund in the 2012/13 academic year.

This document is designed as a reference for providers where they require answers to specific questions. Providers are not required to read through all the questions, but they should refer to it for answers to queries before emailing the 16-19 Bursary Fund email inbox. Where providers have questions on the 16-19 Bursary Fund that are not answered by this document, they should email 1619BursaryFund.EFA@education.gsi.gov.uk

Please note; where links are given to external websites, The Department for Education (or Education Funding Agency) is not responsible for the content or reliability of linked-in websites and it does not necessarily endorse the views expressed within them.

1. Eligibility

The defined vulnerable groups

1.1 What are the vulnerable groups in 2012/13?

There is no change to the defined vulnerable groups in 2012/13. The defined vulnerable groups are:

- Young person is in care (the local authority providing the care for the young person will confirm this).
- Young person is a care leaver (the local authority that looked after the young person will confirm this).
- Young person (not their parents) is in receipt of income support (evidenced by letter/document from the benefits office).
- Young person (not their parents) is in receipt of both Disability Living Allowance (or Incapacity Benefit) and Employment Support Allowance.

The inclusion of young people in receipt of both Disability Living Allowance and Employment Support Allowance in the list of defined vulnerable groups was intended to ensure that all young people who might be living independently of their parents would be eligible to receive £1,200. Young people in these groups are deemed to be financially

independent of their parents / carers, and are entitled to certain social security benefits in their own right. Their inclusion in the defined vulnerable groups reflects this.

1.2 Can you give more explanation about the definition of a young person in care or a care leaver?

For the purposes of the 16-19 Bursary Fund, the definitions are as follows:

Children in care mean children who are looked after by a local authority on a voluntary basis (section 20 of the Children Act 1989) or who are under a care order (section 31 of the Children Act 1989). The term looked after child is defined by section 22 of the Children Act 1989.

A care leaver is legally referred to as a relevant child or a former relevant child. Care leavers mean:

- either young people aged 16 and 17 who were formerly looked after for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16. In legal terms these children are called relevant children or former relevant children.
- or a young person who is aged 18 or above who was looked after prior to becoming 18 for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods of 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16.

Further information about looked after children and care leavers is available on the [Department for Education website](http://www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk/). Other organisations and charities also provide useful information that will help providers to understand these definitions, including The Who Cares? Trust (<http://www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk/>), the National Care Advisory Service (NCAS - <http://www.leavingcare.org/>) and Buttle UK (<http://www.buttleuk.org/pages/quality-mark-for-care-leavers.html>).

1.3 What things should I know about children in care and care leavers?

- Children in care are unique because they are the only young people for whom the state has responsibility for their care and parenting.
- As at 31 March 2011 there were 65,500 children in local authority care in England and 9,950 (aged 16 years and older) who left care.
- Over 70% live with foster carers. Some live in children's homes.
- Children in care and care leavers are individuals just like any other young person and sometimes feel embarrassed about lots of people knowing that they are in care or are a care leaver. That information needs to be treated with sensitivity.
- About a third are placed with carers or in a children's home located in a different local authority to the authority that cares for them.
- Sometimes, care leavers will live semi-independently, for example, in their own flat.
- The biggest primary reason for entering care is because of abuse or neglect. That means they are likely to be more vulnerable than other young people because of the experiences they have had to deal with and may need more support.
- As a group, children in care have poorer education outcomes than their peers by the end of compulsory schooling but they go on to get qualifications post 16.

- Children in care and care leavers tend to leave care and live independently at an earlier age than other young people. The average age of leaving home in the UK is 24 but many care leavers have to manage independently from as young as 16.
- The period of transition to independence can be a particularly stressful time and some care leavers struggle with the responsibilities of managing their own home as well as the emotional stresses of living independently.
- All children in care have a care plan and a social worker. The care plan includes a personal education plan, which the social worker is responsible for drawing up in partnership with other professionals and the young person. Once a child in care turns 16 their care plan will be incorporated into their 'pathway plan', which sets out how they will be supported to ensure that s/he is enabled to make a successful transition to the responsibilities of adulthood.
- Local authorities have ongoing responsibilities to support their care leavers. Care leavers have a pathway plan, which sets out arrangements for making a smooth transition from care to adulthood. This includes a detailed plan to support a young person in education and training. It should also set out the financial support to be provided to the child or young person, in particular where it is to be provided to meet accommodation and maintenance needs. They also have a personal adviser, who meets them regularly to talk about and review the pathway plan.

1.4 Can you clarify the age eligibility for the Bursary Fund?

To be eligible to receive a bursary in the 2012/13 academic year, the young person must be aged under 19 at the start of the academic year in which they start their programme of study (the start of the 2012/13 academic year is 31 August 2012). Where a young person turns 19 during their programme of study, they can continue to be supported to the end of the academic year in which they turn 19, or to the end of the programme of study, whichever is sooner. In general, bursaries should be paid only to young people who have reached the statutory school leaving age.

Young people who are care leavers aged 19 and over on the day their course starts are not eligible to receive support from the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

Learners who are 19 and over, should contact their college or other provider to see if they can access support from the [adult discretionary learner support fund](#).

1.5 How do we identify students eligible for the £1,200 bursary?

Providers are responsible for identifying young people in the defined vulnerable groups, who are eligible for this payment. In doing so they will want to seek appropriate evidence from the young person, for example:

- for those students in receipt of Income Support, or Disability Living Allowance and Employment Support Allowance - a letter setting out the benefit to which the young person is entitled;
- for those students who are in care or a care leaver - written confirmation of the young person's current or previous looked-after status from the local authority which looks after them or provides their leaving care services (this could be a letter or an email, so long as it is an official document from the local authority).

To enable providers to proactively identify students eligible for the £1,200 bursary, they should consider forming partnerships with local authority looked after children's education services and care leaver services. The local authority can then support providers to identify looked after children and care leavers so they can help and encourage these young people to apply for support from the 16-19 Bursary Fund. Good practice includes dissemination of information to other agencies and individuals that support young people including foster carers, residential care workers, and supported housing providers. This will also help providers to acquire appropriate evidence of the young person's status.

Providers should also anticipate that some young people may be reluctant to identify themselves as in care or care leavers because of perceived stigma. We would therefore encourage providers to set up processes that maintain confidentiality and minimise these concerns, for example, letting young people know how their information will be shared; not requiring young people to identify themselves publicly to access the bursary (for example during enrolment).

1.6 If a young person is in foster care, including foster care that has been privately arranged, are they regarded as being 'in care/looked after' and would they therefore be entitled to the £1,200 guaranteed bursary?

Where a young person has been placed with a foster carer by the local authority (including where the foster carer is on the books of an independent fostering agency) s/he is considered to be looked after and is therefore in a vulnerable group for the purposes of the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

A child who is privately fostered (the arrangement is made between the parent and the person who will care for the child) is not considered to be a looked after child, as this is a private arrangement. Local authorities should have published policies stating what support they will provide in these circumstances.

1.7 Can you confirm the criteria around DLA and ESA? Is it the young person who must be in receipt of both of these? Can young people in full time education be in receipt of ESA?

The young person must be in receipt of both DLA and ESA.

Only young people with a disability, who are in full-time education and who are in receipt of DLA, can claim ESA - they need to be aged 16 or over to do so, and ESA is only paid where a person has limited capability for work because of illness or disability. The young person does not have to live independently of their parents, they can claim ESA in their own right (although their parents will not then have any entitlement to claim Child Benefit for them).

It is the case that certain young people may be entitled to benefits in their own right and can choose to apply for those benefits. Access to the £1,200 bursary for those in the defined vulnerable groups is one factor that might affect that decision. But young people should also take into account any other changes to their/their family's income that might result from that change, such as access to Child Benefit or Child Tax Credit before deciding on the most appropriate course of action for them/their family.

The inclusion of young people in receipt of both DLA and ESA in the list of defined vulnerable groups was intended to ensure that all young people who might be living independently of their parents would be eligible to receive £1,200. Disabled young people have not generally been able to access Income Support since 2008 when ESA

was introduced. Therefore, the defined vulnerable groups include those in receipt of ESA, which has replaced Income Support for this group of people if they are also in receipt of DLA. This is why both benefits are required for a young person to be treated in the same way as Income Support claimants.

Young people in these groups are deemed to be financially independent of their parents / carers, and are entitled to certain social security benefits in their own right. Their inclusion in the defined vulnerable groups reflects this.

Further information about ESA is available from the Benefit Enquiry Line (0800 088 2200) and information on Income Support is available from the Jobcentre Plus.

1.8 We have some learners who are receiving Incapacity Benefit rather than ESA. Are they eligible for a bursary?

Yes. ESA was introduced in October 2008 to replace Incapacity Benefit for sick and disabled people; therefore, there are some people in receipt of Incapacity Benefit, and some in receipt of ESA until all have been transferred onto ESA.

Therefore, where a young person aged between 16 and 19 is in full-time education and is in receipt of both Incapacity Benefit and DLA, they would fall into the vulnerable group and would be eligible for the £1,200 bursary payment.

1.9 Does the vulnerable group include children of armed service personnel who have died in service, or children of serving armed services personnel?

No. The Ministry of Defence is operating a separate scheme to provide scholarships set at £1,500 per year to 16-18 year old children of service personnel who have died as a result of their service. The intention of this FE scholarship is to ensure that these young people are able to complete their education and progress to Higher Education (HE). The scheme differs from a learner support scheme such as the 16-19 Bursary Fund, in that it is extra support in recognition of the position of young people in these circumstances.

For progression to HE for young people in these circumstances, the Ministry of Defence is offering a university scholarship which will contribute to the cost of taking a first undergraduate course at a publicly-funded UK higher education institution.

Further information on the scheme and how to apply can be found on the Ministry of Defence website:

<http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/WhatWeDo/Personnel/SPVA/EducationScholarshipSchemeForBereavedServiceChildren.htm>

Young people who are the children of serving armed forces service personnel, while not included in the identified vulnerable group, will be able to apply for a discretionary 16-19 Bursary from their school or college.

1.10 What about asylum seekers? Are they eligible for the bursary?

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) do not receive cash support from the United Kingdom Borders Agency (UKBA). They are the responsibility of the local authority. They are treated as looked after children. As such, and in accordance with the 16-19 Bursary Fund guidance, they are eligible for the £1,200 bursary.

When these young people reach legal adulthood at 18 then, unlike 'citizen' children in care, they have an immigration status that must be considered. If their asylum claim is decided in their favour then the local authority will consequently have related responsibilities to provide them with support and services as 'care leavers'. As such, they are eligible for the £1,200 bursary.

However, where a UASC's asylum claim is not decided in their favour, they may be unable to remain (legally) resident in the UK. When UASC asylum claims have been fully heard and they are "Appeals Rights Exhausted" (ARE) then they have no entitlement to public funds (with a few exceptions where the withdrawal of support would be regarded as a breach of their human rights).

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 may apply for help from the UKBA, who can provide suitable housing and cash for essentials, but they should not be accessing other income. As long as an asylum seeker has not had their application refused then learner support in the form of course related books, equipment or a travel pass may be provided. But under no circumstances should a provider give cash to an asylum seeker who is not an UASC.

Further information that you may find useful is also available from the National Care Advisory Service (<http://www.leavingcare.org/>), the Coram Children's Legal Centre (<http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com/>) and the Refugee Council (<http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk>).

Discretionary bursaries

1.11 How do we decide which students should have a discretionary bursary?

With the exception of the bursaries paid to young people in the defined vulnerable groups, providers are free to determine which young people should be eligible to receive a bursary and how much they should receive.

Providers should manage the number and size of discretionary bursary awards to keep within their budget and to enable those facing the most significant financial barriers to participate in education. When assessing the need for financial support, providers should also consider other exceptional circumstances, such as where a young person is providing care to a sick or disabled relative. They are unlikely to be receiving Carer's Allowance, though this is possible if they are in learning for less than 21 hours a week. In most cases i.e.: where not in receipt of Carer's Allowance, providers should establish the circumstances of the young person, including what benefits the household is receiving and whether the young person is providing care for short or long periods.

Unearned income (e.g. shares/investments, savings, rental income) may be taken into account when assessing whether students should receive a discretionary bursary and providers may also choose to take into account the number of dependent children in the household.

We encourage providers to agree a consistent approach across an area, taking account of the needs and circumstances of young people locally.

Examples of how providers are determining eligibility for discretionary bursaries are given in the Examples of Good Practice document.

Valid Provision

1.12 What type of providers are eligible to access the bursary fund?

To be eligible for an allocation of the 16-19 Bursary funding, learning provision must be publicly funded and subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (e.g. Ofsted). That provision must also be:

- funded by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) (either directly or via a local authority); or
- funded or co-financed by the European Social Fund; or
- otherwise publicly funded and lead 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.

1.13 Are young people aged under 19, studying Higher Education qualifications eligible to receive a bursary?

No. The 16-19 Bursary Fund is designed to help young people with the costs of continuing in further education only; separate student finance arrangements are available to help support young people in higher education – young people can find out more details at www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

1.14 Are young people in Apprenticeships programmes eligible to apply for 16-19 Bursary Fund support?

Young people on waged Apprenticeship programmes are not eligible to apply for support. Young people on a non-waged Access to Apprenticeship pathway from 1st August 2011 or who started a Programme-led Apprenticeship before 31st July 2011 are eligible to apply for 16-19 Bursary Fund support.

1.15 What are the reciprocal arrangements with Wales/Scotland?

If a Welsh/Scottish student is studying at a provider in England they may apply for support from the 16-19 Bursary Fund. If the student is in receipt of Welsh/Scottish EMA, the provider must take account of this when deciding whether to award a bursary and at what level.

The reciprocal arrangements with Wales, provided that the provision is state funded and meets the remainder of the eligibility criteria, are as follows:

Young people from Wales at school or college in England:

- Young people can apply for a Welsh EMA, and this should be the first port of call;
- Young people may also apply for a discretionary bursary only from the 16-19 Bursary Fund;
- These young people are not eligible for the full £1,200 bursary for students in the defined vulnerable groups.

Young people from England at school or college in Wales:

- Learners from England being educated in an FE College in Wales can apply for discretionary learner support from their provider in Wales (via their Welsh provider's Financial Contingency Fund);
- Learners from England being educated in a special college or a school sixth form in Wales can apply for a discretionary bursary from the 16-19 Bursary Fund from their home local authority in England;
- Learners from England being educated in Wales, who also belong to one of the defined vulnerable groups will be eligible for a 16-19 Bursary of £1,200, which should be paid by their home local authority;
- Learners from England who started a course in an FE College in Wales and are continuing into a third year of study may be eligible to continue to receive Welsh EMA, if they continue to meet the eligibility criteria.

2. Assessment and Payment of Bursaries

Assessment and administration of bursaries

2.1 Can we subsidise the bursary fund from our own funds?

There is nothing to prevent a school, college or training organisation topping up the 16-19 Bursary Fund with other funding to support young people facing financial barriers to learning. If the scheme extends beyond those students facing the most significant financial barriers the amount allocated to those students must be sufficient to enable them to participate in education.

2.2 Can providers implement a collaborative approach to the management of the 16-19 Bursary Fund, including pooling funds and central management?

Yes, in fact schools, Academies, colleges and training providers are encouraged to work together with other local providers and the local authority to develop a common approach to the 16-19 Bursary Fund. Providers may wish to use existing partnership arrangements to discuss such issues or develop new joint working protocols where these are not in place.

However, this will have implications for MI and budget reporting. Those participating in a collaborative arrangement must be prepared to submit an MI return for each provider involved.

It is considered good practice for providers and the relevant professionals in local authorities to liaise regarding the young people's 16-19 Bursary payments and their Care Plans or Pathway Plans to guard against overlaps or gaps. It should be noted however, that 16-19 Bursary Fund payments are intended for helping with participation-related costs only.

2.3 Should we assess a student's household income?

With the exception of the £1,200 bursary for students in the defined vulnerable groups, providers should assess the young person's actual need for financial assistance before determining whether to award a bursary. This usually means taking account of the young

person's household income as evidenced by receipt of benefit and/or P60, Tax Credit Award Notice or evidence of self-employment income.

Unearned income (e.g. shares/investments, savings, rental income) may be taken into account when assessing whether students should receive a discretionary bursary and providers may also choose to take into account the number of dependent children in the household.

Examples of how some providers have set eligibility for a discretionary bursary, and how they have assessed student's applications are given in the Examples of Good Practice document.

2.4 Can we accept applications from students at any time during the academic year?

Many providers offering standard academic year provision will encourage that requests for bursaries are submitted by a certain date, so they can assess the overall level of demand and make awards on a fair basis. But it is inevitable that some needs will develop in-year so there should be no absolute cut-off date.

For providers offering short-term foundation learning courses or roll-on roll-off provision, young people enrolling on these courses should be able to apply for support from the 16-19 Bursary Fund, as appropriate, over the academic year.

2.5 Young people from the defined vulnerable groups may change providers and apply for a second bursary – how do we deal with this?

We expect schools, colleges and training providers to take reasonable steps to ensure that funding is issued in such a way as to keep the risk of 'over-payment' to a minimum, whilst ensuring that the students' needs are met. Providers are encouraged to pay bursaries in instalments, allowing awards to be phased over a course, and to withhold payments if a student stops attending. We also encourage providers in an area to discuss with each other the principles of how they will allocate their 16-19 Bursary Funds to help with this situation.

2.6 Are we required to provide an Equality Analysis on the 16-19 Bursary Fund policy?

A full Equality Impact Assessment for the 16-19 Bursary Fund was published in March 2011 and is available on the Department for Education website (<http://www.education.gov.uk/16to19/studentsupport/financialsupport/a0064057/financial-support-for-learning>).

Providers are responsible for developing their own arrangements for the administration of the 16-19 Bursary Fund within their organisation; as stated in the Guide for 2012/13, providers should develop a statement on how they will administer and distribute their funds. As part of this, providers will want to consider undertaking their own Equality Analysis of their emerging 16-19 Bursary Fund administration policies.

2.7 Transport – can we use the 16-19 Bursary Funding to operate a bus route to get students here?

The overriding principle of the 16-19 Bursary Fund is that it should respond to individual need where there is a barrier to participation.

Local authorities have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement that specifies the arrangements for the provision of transport that they consider necessary to facilitate the attendance of young people of sixth form age receiving education and training. This should include the provision of financial assistance as they deem appropriate.

Bursaries to help meet transport costs should be targeted to individual students, where those costs have been identified as a real barrier to that student's participation. Therefore, they should not be used to block subsidise the provision of transport.

2.8 Can we use any of our allocation for administration costs?

Any provider or local authority administering the 16-19 Bursary Fund to young people may use up to 5% of their total allocation to meet administration costs.

2.9 How do we deal with complaints or appeals about our decisions on bursary funding?

If a student feels aggrieved about how their request for a bursary was handled, they should follow the provider's usual complaints procedure.

Bursaries are administered by providers and Local Authorities at their discretion. The EFA does not generally have any role in respect of individual cases and may only become involved if the allegation was that the Guide was being seriously disregarded e.g. vulnerable students were not being awarded the £1,200 bursary, or where there was misuse of the funding such as for block subsidy of a canteen/transport.

The escalation of complaints in relation to the 16-19 Bursary Fund should be handled no differently to other complaints to a provider. Providers must have their own complaints and appeals procedure to deal with a number of issues such as admissions policy, curriculum, and dress code for example and, in all instances, that procedure must be exhausted before approaching the EFA at Enquiries.EFA@education.gsi.gov.uk.

Where an Academy's complaints procedure has been exhausted and the issue is of a serious nature as set out above, the complaint should be forwarded to the Academies Team at the EFA at AcademyQuestions.EFA@education.gsi.gov.uk

Payments to students

2.10 How frequently should we make payments? Do payments need to be upfront or in arrears?

Providers are free to determine the frequency of payments, taking account of: the purpose of the bursary (e.g. one-off or sustained support); the young person's circumstances; local administrative arrangements; and probity.

However, it is not recommended that large or lump sum payments are made to students all at once.

Good practice would be to make in-kind payments, rather than cash, where possible. Where providers deem it appropriate to pay cash, ideally these payments should be

made in instalments and by BACS. Payments by cash or cheque should be made where neither of the above options is possible, or where there is a requirement for the student to purchase necessary travel pass or equipment at certain times.

2.11 What conditions should we be applying to payments?

Receipt of a bursary, for vulnerable learner bursaries and discretionary bursaries, should be conditional on the student meeting agreed standards set by the school, Academy, college or training provider, for example, relating to attendance and/or standards of behaviour.

Providers should ensure that their policies with regards to the conditions of payment are clear, available and understood by students.

Where conditions for payments include attainment, it is good practice for providers to consider cases for students in the defined vulnerable groups on an individual basis. Where there are concerns about attendance and/or standards of behaviour it is good practice to work with the student to address any issues, and where students are in care or care leavers, to work with their responsible local authority to ensure they are adequately supported.

2.12 Can providers recover funds already paid to students?

The 16-19 Bursary Fund has been introduced for the purpose of removing specific barriers to participation, and should be used specifically for this purpose – it is not an incentive for participation, but targeted support to individuals who are struggling with the financial costs associated with participating in learning. Therefore, it should be spent in such a way that it removes specific barriers – for example, cost of lunches, equipment, books etc.

As specified in the Guide, receipt of a bursary should be conditional on the student meeting agreed standards set by the provider. Although it is not a requirement, providers may adopt a policy whereby they set out that they will claw back money from students where they have not spent it on the agreed 'qualifying' purposes; providers should consider the individual circumstances of the student before any money is recovered. Providers should ensure that their policies with regards to this are clear, available and understood by students.

2.13 Can providers withhold payments from students?

Receipt of a bursary, for vulnerable learner bursaries and discretionary bursaries, should be conditional on the student meeting agreed standards set by the school, Academy, college or training provider, for example, relating to attendance and/or standards of behaviour. Providers should ensure that their policies with regards to the conditions of payment are clear, available and understood by students.

Where students do not meet the **agreed** conditions for payment, providers are entitled to withhold payments; providers should consider the individual circumstances of the student before any money is withheld.

2.14 Is there any advice on bank accounts?

Students aged 16 are able to open a basic bank account, which is offered by 16 members of the British Bankers Association. The basic bank account will allow for receipt of the 16-19 Bursary Fund, including by electronic transfer (BACs), and will allow funds to be withdrawn via ATMs as well as via standing orders and direct debits where necessary.

Where bursary payments are to be made to a bank account, they should only be made to the student's bank account. Payments should not be made into another person's account, except in exceptional circumstances where a student is unable to administer their own account. Payments may be made to a joint account, as long as the student is one of the account holders.

If a student has a Post Office account, it should be noted that these accounts do not accept payments by BACs. If a student has a Credit Union account, the student should check with the Credit Union that it will receive payments made by BACs.

2.15 Are we required to pay students by BACs? Our school does not have this facility.

It is good practice to pay 'in kind' bursaries rather than cash, for example travel passes, course-related books or equipment, free meals or course trips. This helps to ensure that the bursary awarded is sufficient to enable these students to participate and is addressing the specific need of the individual student.

However, where bursaries are paid directly to young people, it is good practice to pay by BACS transfer into their own bank account. If this is not possible, providers may also make small cash payments or payment by cheque where they consider it appropriate to do so.

2.16 What sort of 'in kind' payments are acceptable?

There is no restriction on what 'in kind' payments may be made under the bursary scheme. Examples of 'in kind' payments are: travel passes, meals, course materials.

However, in the case of bursaries for students in the defined vulnerable groups, the value of in kind payments and how their cost is deducted from the £1,200 should be made clear to students and those that support them.

2.17 Can you clarify the requirements around pro-rata bursaries?

Where a student is in a defined vulnerable group and is undertaking a course lasting less than 30 weeks, their award should be an appropriate proportion of the £1,200 (for example £600 for a 15 week course). Providers should also consider whether, depending on the financial needs of the young person, it is appropriate to pro-rata the award further for part-time courses.

For example, if a vulnerable group student on a 30 week course is eligible for a bursary of £1,200, a vulnerable student on a 6 week course (on a full-time basis) would be eligible for a pro-rata bursary of £240, calculated as follows:

(Full bursary of £1,200) divided by 30 weeks = £40 per week

6 weeks at £40 per week = £240

Where a vulnerable group student is undertaking a course lasting 30 weeks or more on a part-time basis, it is reasonable for the provider to consider proportioning the £1,200 down to an hourly/daily rate and pay accordingly. Likewise, where the course lasts for less than 30 weeks on a part-time basis, providers may consider proportioning the £1,200 down to an hourly/daily rate and pay accordingly.

2.18 Where a learner is on a course for more than one academic year, and they are vulnerable, do they get £1,200 each year?

The £1,200 would be payable for each academic year the young person is in education or training.

2.19 Are we able to award students who fall into the vulnerable group less than £1,200, if they do not need the full amount?

We would not usually expect young people in the defined vulnerable groups to be awarded less than £1,200, where they are on a course lasting 30 weeks or more and are participating full-time. However, there may be some exceptional cases, where providers deem that the financial requirements for participation are entirely catered for - an example is where a young person is attending specialist residential provision where all costs are covered. In these cases, providers must ensure that they have a clear agreement in place with the student about why they were awarding less than £1,200.

2.20 Is there a limit to how much funding can be awarded for a discretionary bursary? Can we award these students £1,200?

There are no limits set for the level of discretionary payment awarded to students wishing to access support from the 16-19 Bursary Fund. Where providers feel it appropriate, they can award discretionary bursaries of £1,200. However, providers are expected to stay within budget and pay young people in the defined vulnerable groups bursaries of at least £1,200 (pro-rated for courses of less than 30 weeks).

2.21 Does payment of a bursary affect the treatment of any financial support offered to 16-19 year olds by the DWP/Jobcentre Plus with regards to the impact on household benefits?

DWP income-related benefits disregard any payments of the 16-19 Bursary. The 16-19 Bursaries are paid directly to young people in addition to other benefits paid to families by the Government, such as Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance, Child Benefit, Working Tax Credit, and do not affect them.

However, if the young person is in receipt of DLA and ESA, parents can no longer receive certain household/family benefits for that child. Young people and their families should take into account any other changes to their/their family's income that might result from that change, such as access to Child Benefit or Child Tax Credit before deciding on the most appropriate course of action for them.

3. Allocations to providers

3.1 How has my 2012/13 allocation been calculated?

There are three elements to the calculations for the 16-19 Bursary Fund allocations in 2012/13:

- a full year vulnerable learner bursary element (for courses of 30 weeks or more) – based on data provided in the 2011/12 in-year MI return or other correspondence;
- a pro-rata vulnerable learner bursary element (for courses of less than 30 weeks) – based on data provided in the 2011/12 in-year MI return or other correspondence;
- a discretionary bursary element – based on the number of EMA learners in receipt of £30/week in 2009/10.

(Where the above data has not been available, alternative data has been used, as set out in providers' allocations statements).

We have calculated these three elements separately to ensure that allocations reflect learners' needs and so that all providers receive a fair allocation for discretionary bursaries. Although the vulnerable learner bursary and discretionary bursary elements are calculated separately, providers will receive one allocation – the elements are not ring-fenced.

The allocations for EFA-funded Independent Specialist Providers (ISPs) which cater for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, include an additional amount of funding to enable them to pay discretionary bursaries only to students aged 19-24 with a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA).

Providers should manage the number and size of discretionary bursary awards to keep within their budget, targeting bursaries towards those facing the most significant financial barriers to participation. A small emergency fund for exceptional circumstances and late emerging vulnerable learners should also be retained.

3.2 Are there any differences with the allocations in 2012/13?

Allocations to maintained school sixth forms will continue to be made via local authorities, who are asked to pass the identified funding directly to the school, which is then responsible for administering the fund. Local authorities will also be allocated funds, as appropriate, to cover students in other maintained institutions such as Pupil Referral Units and Special Schools and a small number of other providers with whom the EFA does not have a direct funding relationship. Local authorities are no longer required to passport funding to non-maintained special schools or EFA funded Independent Specialist Providers as these will be funded direct by the EFA.

In 2012/13, where a young person with a LDA has been placed by a local authority in independent provision and where the local authority is funding that place, the school should approach the host local authority (the local authority in which the school is located) to access the appropriate support from the 16-19 Bursary Fund for eligible students.

3.3 When will we find out what our 2012/13 allocations for the 16-19 Bursary Fund are?

Details of 16-19 Bursary Fund allocations were notified to providers and local authorities in March/April 2012.

3.4 Will the Education Funding Agency be holding back a contingency fund in 2012/13, as in 2011/12? Can we request more funding?

The Education Funding Agency will hold a small contingency fund, as in 2011/12. This will be used for exceptional cases only, to ensure that £1,200 bursaries for young people in the defined vulnerable groups can be paid. The EFA does not expect to top-up providers' allocations from the contingency fund to the same extent as in 2011/12, as the number of students reported as being in the defined vulnerable groups has been taken into account in the calculation of providers' 2012/13 allocations.

3.5 If we have unspent bursary funding from 2011/12, can we carry this over into 2012/13 or will this be recovered by the EFA?

Any underspends from 2011/12 can be rolled forward into 2012/13 and used alongside the 2012/13 allocation to help address the needs of disadvantaged learners.

Should any provider have an underspend they should seek to assure themselves that they are being proactive enough in identifying disadvantaged young people and also whether sufficient funding is being awarded to meet the needs of those disadvantaged young people they have identified.

3.6 What are the arrangements for allocations to providers who operate sub-contracts?

Where a provider operates out of more than one location across England, or through sub-contracts, the allocation will be made to the lead office for distribution to each site. Providers should ensure that any young people attending provision that is delivered by sub-contractors are able to apply for the 16-19 Bursary Fund. It is the provider's responsibility to ensure that the scheme's objectives are met at each site and by any sub-contractors.

3.7 What is the schedule of payments of the Bursary Fund to providers in 2012/13?

In 2012/13, two-thirds (approximately 67%) will be paid in August; the remaining one-third (approximately 33%) will be paid in April 2013.

3.8 Can you confirm the process for converter Academies receiving their allocation?

In 2012/13, bursary fund allocations are released in two instalments; in August and April, in a 67:33 split. The EFA pay open Academies directly and so the process for making payments to converter Academies is as follows:

Where a school converts on the 1st of the month that an instalment of the 16-19 Bursary Fund is due (August or April), then the new Academy will receive that instalment of the

16-19 Bursary Fund directly from the EFA and will be removed from the local authority; the local authority's payment will be adjusted accordingly.

Where a conversion occurs mid-month (any time from 2nd of the month) that an instalment of the 16-19 Bursary Fund is due, that instalment will be routed through the local authority. Any subsequent instalments from that date will be made direct to the new Academy from the EFA.

Where a school converts to an Academy in a month where no instalment of the 16-19 Bursary Fund is due, then any subsequent instalments from that date will be made direct to the new Academy from the EFA.

4. Communications, Governance and Monitoring

Communications

4.1 Are providers responsible for communicating details and availability of the Bursary Fund to students?

Due to the discretionary nature of the 16-19 Bursary Fund, young people are most likely to hear about the support they can expect as a result of communications directly from schools, academies, colleges and training providers. Providers will need to consider innovative solutions to raise awareness of the 16-19 Bursary Fund, including the locally set eligibility criteria, amongst young people, particularly the most vulnerable and those not in education, employment or training (NEET). These communications should, ideally, take place before the young person makes their post-16 choices and it is expected that messages about the 16-19 Bursary Fund will, in most cases, be integral to wider messages about the provision available locally.

It is expected that providers will keep information on financial support available for students up to date in their literature and on their website. It is also good practice for providers to include clear and understandable information about the eligibility for the 16-19 Bursary Fund on their website to ensure that young people are made aware of the level of support they may be able to receive. Information should include timings of payment, what cash/in kind support is available and any conditions attached. Criteria for the £1,200 vulnerable groups bursaries should be clear and accurate so that all students in the vulnerable groups are aware of these payments: it is particularly important that students in the defined vulnerable groups are aware of and understand the support that is available to them. It is good practice to target the dissemination of information at a range of services and professionals that work with children in care and care leavers including social workers, foster carers, supported lodgings providers, children's homes, leaving care personal advisers, virtual school heads and representatives etc.

Examples of how some providers have promoted the Bursary Fund to prospective and current students are given in the *16-19 Bursary Fund Examples of Good Practice* document.

4.2 How can we ensure that young people know about the 16-19 Bursary Fund when they are making their post-16 choices?

The Education Act 2011 places schools under a duty to secure access to independent and impartial careers guidance for their pupils from September 2012. This must include information on all options available in respect of 16-18 education or training, including apprenticeships and other work-based education and training options. Schools may work individually or in consortia/partnerships to secure careers guidance services. DfE statutory guidance to schools can be found at: <http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/s/statutory%20guidance%20for%20schools%20on%20careers%20guidance.pdf>

Education and training providers will want to familiarise themselves with the arrangements operating in the schools from which they recruit, and to ensure that the schools, and their careers guidance providers, have information about local 16-19 Bursary Fund arrangements.

Up to 30,000 young people are expected to take part in the National Citizen Service (NCS) in summer 2012. This is likely to include many who are vulnerable and who may not yet have made their post-16 choices. The NCS offers a further opportunity to tell young people about the opportunities available to them, including the 16-19 Bursary Fund. The Department for Education has published details of NCS providers and this can be found at:

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/xls/n/ncs%20providers%20by%20local%20authority.xls>

4.3 How will young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) get to hear about the bursary?

Local authorities are responsible for tracking young people's participation in education or training so they can support young people who are NEET to find a suitable place in education or training. This means that local authorities should be able to tell providers about the numbers and characteristics of young people NEET who might benefit from moving into education or training and receiving a 16-19 Bursary. It will also be important that providers give their local authority up to date information about the 16-19 Bursary Fund arrangements they offer, and they may want to discuss the best way of ensuring that information about the 16-19 Bursary, and learning opportunities, reaches young people who are NEET. Providers may also want to discuss 16-19 Bursary Fund arrangements with specialist services supporting care leavers and disabled young people, and with Jobcentre Plus.

16 and 17 year olds NEET may also be supported through the new Youth Contract (<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/participation/a00203664/youthcontractprov>). This will provide intensive support to those who are NEET and who haven't yet attained any GCSEs at grades A* - C, aiming to re-engage them in education, an apprenticeship or employment with training. The Youth Contract will be delivered on a regional basis with providers announced by the Education Funding Agency in June 2012. Education and training providers may wish to ensure that the local Youth Contract provider has information about their 16-19 Bursary Fund arrangements as they support young people to participate.

MI, Data and Audit

4.4 What will be the data/MI requirements in 2012/13?

Providers should have administrative procedures that record bursary applications and awards (including the number, value, purpose, whether awarded or not, and brief justification). Providers will need to submit **in-year (2012/13)** management information (MI) at the end of October 2012 about the number of young people in receipt of vulnerable learner bursaries (full and pro-rata).

An **end of 2011/12 year** MI return should also be submitted. Details of how providers will submit this information will be provided separately.

At the **end of the 2012/13 academic year**, providers will also be asked to complete and submit an end of year MI return to support its monitoring of the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

Providers should complete the appropriate fields in the 2012/13 ILR and the school census to record details of the bursaries awarded to students in the defined vulnerable groups and for discretionary purposes.

4.5 Can providers include Bursary Fund data on the 2012/13 ILR?

Yes, data fields for the 16-19 Bursary Fund are included in the 2012/13 ILR and the school census. Providers are encouraged to complete the appropriate fields to record details of the bursaries awarded to students in the defined vulnerable groups and for discretionary purposes.

4.6 Will there be an audit by the EFA? What records do I need to keep for audit purposes?

16-19 Bursary Funds are subject to assurance as part of the normal assurance arrangements for 16-19 education and training. Audit guidance is available for providers on the Department for Education website¹.

Providers should have administrative procedures that record bursary applications and awards (including the number, value, purpose, whether awarded or not, and brief justification).

For audit purposes, hard copies of all documentation for the Bursary Fund should be kept for a period of 6 years. Providers may wish to keep electronic records of documents, but hard copies should also be available. This documentation should include evidence of the application process, documents relating to how the learner was assessed and the funds issued.

4.7 What are the audit responsibilities of local authorities?

We would expect each local authority to consider, through a risk assessment, whether there is a need to audit 16-19 Bursary Funding in respect of:

- any provision where the local authority is an EFA funded provider in its own right;
- its own maintained providers (including school sixth forms);
- those non-maintained providers where the local authority holds and administers the funding on providers' behalf.

We would not expect local authorities to audit those non-maintained providers where funding is merely passported to them by the local authority.

Local authorities have to make a decision on the level of audit work which they need to carry out to enable them to sign their Annual Grant Return and Use of Funds Statement to the EFA. This audit work may or may not include 16-19 Bursary Funding.

4.8 Will the EFA be evaluating the 16-19 Bursary Fund?

¹ This document can be found at:

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/YPLA-16-19-BURSARY>

The Department has commissioned an independent evaluation of the 16-19 Bursary Fund. The final evaluation report will be published in early 2015.



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