

Care to Learn Guidance 2011/12

June 2011

► For guidance

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Introduction

This document has been updated for the 2011/12 academic year (29 August 2011 to 26 August 2012). Do not use this document after the end of August 2012. The guidance within this document is subject to change. Please check the website to make sure that you are using the correct version.

Care to Learn enables young people under the age of 20¹ to continue in, or return to, learning after the birth of a child by assisting with the costs of childcare and associated travel (up to £160 per child per week or up to £175 per child per week in London).

This guidance is aimed at all those involved in the delivery of Care to Learn. It sets out the scheme eligibility criteria and provides general guidance – it is not intended to offer definitive advice on every possible situation.

Summary of changes

The key changes for the 2011/12 academic year are as follows:

| Change for 2011/12 | Brief Description |
|-------------------------|---|
| The Application process | Young parents need to choose their Learning Provider and Childcare Provider before they apply. The young parent, Learning Provider and Childcare Provider need to complete the application form before it is returned to the Learner Support Service. There is no separate registration process as in 2010/11. See page 7 for more details. |
| Length of full course | The length, start and end dates of the full course must now be entered on the application form by the Learning Provider. See page 9 for more details. |

¹ The Department for Education (DfE) is working with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) to consider how best to support parents aged 19 or over at the start of their course from September 2012.

Eligibility criteria

In order for a young person to receive support from Care to Learn, they, their Learning Provider and their Childcare Provider must meet all the eligibility criteria for this scheme.

All criteria are detailed fully later in this section, but in summary the young person must:

- be aged under 20 on the date that their course or learning programme starts;
- be the main carer for their child(ren);
- be living and studying in England;
- meet the residency criteria;
- be on a course or learning programme that has some public funding;
- be using childcare that is registered with Ofsted or the Care Quality Commission

It is expected that young parents will access any entitlement to free early education place(s) for their child(ren) before applying for funding from Care to Learn.

Eligibility of the young person

Age

The young person must be under 20 on the date their course or learning programme starts. Students who become 20 during their course will continue to be funded to the end of that specific course or learning programme, i.e. the same course at the same level.

The young person should **complete a new application** for each year that they want to claim Care to Learn funding.

Main carer for the child(ren)

The young person must be the main carer for the child(ren) for whom they are claiming Care to Learn. If a young person loses custody of their child(ren), even temporarily, the Learner Support Service must be advised immediately.

Care to Learn may be claimed by the mother or the father of the child, as long as:

- the other parent is unable to provide childcare (e.g. they are also in learning or absent); and
- the other parent is not claiming Child Tax Credits.

Home address and place of study

Only young people who are both living and studying in England are eligible for Care to Learn.

A London weighting applies to Care to Learn. The London-weighted maximum is £175 per child per week (compared with up to £160 outside London). Eligibility for London weighting² is determined by the young person's home address.

Residency

To be eligible for Care to Learn a young person must normally:

- be living in England; and
- be a British citizen or
- a national of a country within the European Economic Area (EEA), or the child of a Swiss national or Turkish migrant worker.

Where the young person indicates that they are a migrant from a country that is outside the EEA, they will be eligible for Care to Learn only if one of the following immigration status/conditions applies:

- Asylum seeker under the age of 18;
- Asylum seeker over the age of 18 **only** if they are a care leaver aged 18 or 19 (in which case they must send with their application an original letter from their local authority that shows their address and confirms they are a care leaver);
- Refugee status;
- Humanitarian Protection;
- Discretionary leave;
- Indefinite leave to remain;
- Indefinite leave to enter;
- Limited leave to remain;
- Limited leave to enter;
- Leave outside the rules.

Young people are not required to submit any evidence of their residency status with their application. Where they confirm that they are a migrant from outside the EEA, the YPLA may carry out checks with the UK Border Agency (UKBA) to confirm their immigration status. Supporting evidence may be requested from the young person if any issues are identified.

The following forms of evidence may be requested, depending on the circumstances of the young person:

- ID card for foreign nationals (issued to those granted leave to remain in the UK (a) as a student, (b) on the basis of marriage/civil partnership/unmarried couple and (c) as dependents of those in category (b)).

² London weighting applies to: Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Camden, City of London, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Kingston-upon-Thames, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Newham, Redbridge, Richmond-upon-Thames, Southwark, Sutton, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Wandsworth and Westminster.

- Appropriate vignette or sticker in their passport (issued to foreign nationals granted leave to remain in any other category).
- Application registration card (ARC) and standard acknowledgement letter (SAL) issued to people who claim asylum or make a claim under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Eligibility of the Learning Provider and the course/learning programme

As long as students meet the scheme eligibility criteria, there are no requirements for course length, duration or level to be eligible for this scheme. The table below sets out courses that fall in and outside the scheme.

| Courses eligible for Care to Learn | Courses not eligible for Care to Learn |
|--|--|
| Non-accredited day sessions and short courses within the community such as First Aid, Healthy Eating, Parenting etc. | Privately funded learning, e.g. at an independent school or other institution where students are required to pay tuition fees. |
| School and college courses including Foundation Learning, 14–19 Diplomas, GCSEs, AS-levels and A2-levels. | Voluntary work that is <u>not</u> a required part of an agreed course or learning programme. |
| Apprenticeship courses where the apprentice has ‘non-employed’ status. | Apprenticeship courses where the apprentice has ‘employed’ status i.e. receives a wage. |
| Further education (FE) courses in a higher education (HE) institution – this includes Access courses and diplomas. | HE courses in an HE institution or FE institution – courses leading to a first degree, HND, HNC, Diploma in HE, Foundation Degree or Initial Teacher Training. |

| | |
|--|---|
| Foundation HE courses where they are followed at an FE institution, e.g. BTEC Diploma. | Distance learning and e-learning courses. |
|--|---|

Study time and work placements

Young people can claim Care to Learn for independent study time needed as part of their course e.g. for completion of coursework, revision or homework. This must be agreed with their Learning Provider.

Care to Learn will support time needed to undertake work placements, provided that they are an integral part of the course and have been identified as such.

The costs associated with study time and work placements must come within the Care to Learn weekly maximum amount (£160 per child per week and up to £175 per child per week in London).

Eligibility of the childcare provision

Ofsted registration

Childcare provision that is registered with Ofsted is eligible to provide childcare supported by this scheme. To be eligible it must be registered in one of the following ways:

- on the Ofsted Early Years Register;
- on the compulsory and/or voluntary part of the Ofsted General Childcare Register;
- childcare provision offered by Ofsted-registered schools, such as breakfast and after-school clubs.

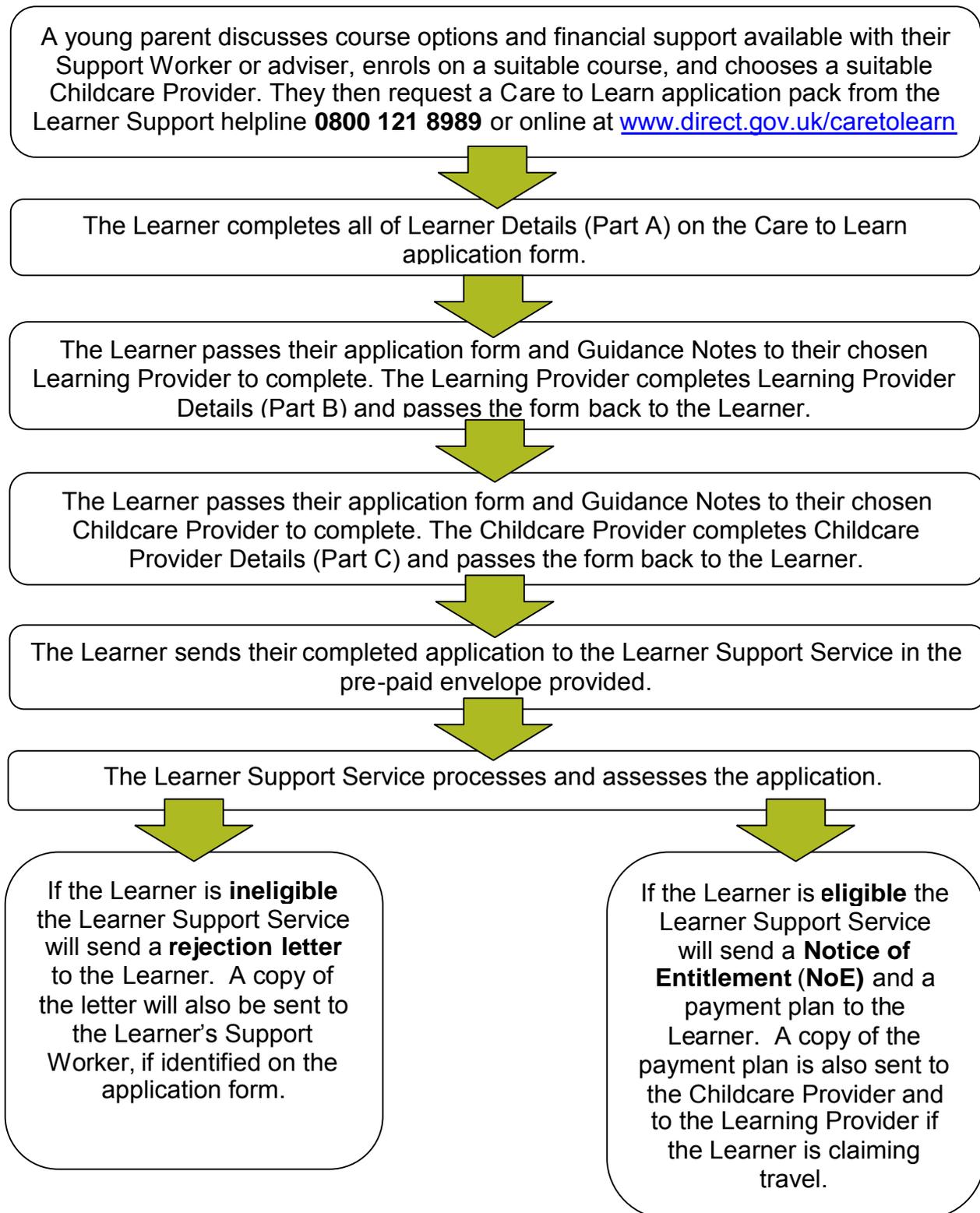
Support for specialist provision on the Care Quality Commission's register may also be granted on a case-by-case basis if general childcare provision is not suitable for the child.

The Childcare Provider will need to provide evidence of being registered with Ofsted, or, in the case of a school providing childcare, their unique reference number (URN).

Where a Childcare Provider is related to the child, that Childcare Provider **must**, in addition to being registered with Ofsted:

- live apart from the child; **and**
- be providing registered childcare services for other children to whom they are not related.

Overview of the application process



Application and assessment

The application process for 2011/12 has changed: young people need to choose a Learning Provider and Childcare Provider before applying.

For 2011/12, Learner, Learning Provider and Childcare Provider details are collected on one form. All three parts of the application form must be completed before the form is returned to the Learner Support Service.

Application Forms

To apply for Care to Learn the young person will need to submit an application form to the Learner Support Service in the pre-paid envelope provided. Applications are made in the name of the young person; payments for childcare are then made directly to the Childcare Provider on their behalf.

Where learning starts on or after 29 August 2011, the 2011/12 application form should be used. To request an application pack (or packs to distribute):

- providers and other stakeholders should call YPLA Publications on 0845 602 2260, quoting reference **YPLA-G-002/2011**.
- young people should call the Learner Support helpline on 0800 121 8989, or order a pack online by visiting the [Directgov website](#).

The application pack contains Guidance Notes to help the young person, Learning Provider and Childcare Provider complete the form. The Guidance Notes can also be downloaded from the [Care to Learn website](#).

We recommend that the young person supplies details of their support worker (if they have one) – e.g. name, organisation, address and telephone or mobile number. This will help in dealing with any queries.

Young people will normally receive a reply within three weeks.

Assessment of the young person's eligibility

The Learner Support Service will carry out an assessment of the young person's application to determine their eligibility. It will also carry out checks to ensure the Childcare Provider, Learning Provider and course are eligible for this scheme, and that the childcare hours claimed are reasonable compared to the learning hours entered.

Care to Learn payments cannot be made until all information from the young person, the Learning Provider and the Childcare Provider has been received and approved. Where an incomplete application form is submitted, the Learner Support Service will write to the relevant party to request the outstanding information. A copy of any correspondence will also be sent to the young person's support worker, if identified on the application form.

Information required before payment can be made

Childcare Providers

The Childcare Provider needs to supply the Learner Support Service with:

- their details;
- childcare dates and fees;
- a copy of their Ofsted registration certificate - if not previously submitted in 2011/12; and
- bank or building society account evidence - if not previously submitted in 2011/12.

Learning Providers

The Learning Provider needs to supply the Learner Support Service with:

- course name, level and length;
- course dates;
- number of hours of learning each week;
- details of the travel costs the young person wishes to claim; and
- bank or building society account evidence - if not previously submitted in 2011/12.

The Learning Provider must also verify the existence of the child(ren), and thereby the young person's eligibility to receive support, by checking the child's birth certificate or proof of Child Benefit.

Course Length

Details of the **full** course length and start/end dates for the young person are now required. Learning Providers will also need to supply the actual start and future end dates for continuing students whose course may have begun in a previous academic year.

For example:

- if the young person is studying a two year NVQ course starting on 5th September 2011 and ending on 19th July 2013 you should enter these dates.
- if a **continuing** young person is studying a two year NVQ course (at the same level) which started on 6th September 2010 and ends on 20th July 2012 you should enter these dates.
- if a young person studied a course at Level 1 last year and is progressing to Level 2 this year, even if this is in the same subject, this is considered to be a **new** course.

Notifications

Once a young person's application has been processed and approved, the Learner Support Service will issue a notice of entitlement (NoE) and a payment plan to the young person and the Childcare Provider. This confirms the amount to be paid each week for childcare. A NoE covers the whole or

remainder of the academic year, enabling the young person to complete and embark on a new course within the same academic year without being required to submit a new full application.

If applicable, a separate letter is sent to the young person and the Learning Provider to confirm the amount to be paid for additional travel costs. This does not include details of the amount payable for childcare.

Where there is more than one Childcare Provider, a payment plan will be issued for each. The amounts on each plan combined must not exceed the Care to Learn weekly maximum.

Late applications and backdated claims

If the Learner Support Service receives the application within **28 days** of the start of the course or learning programme, payments may be backdated to the start of the course or learning programme. If the application is received after the 28 day period, payments will begin from the Monday of the week the application was received by the Learner Support Service.

Advisers working with teenage parents should encourage and support young people to make their applications for Care to Learn in good time.

Administration

Payments

All payments will be made securely by the Banks Automated Clearing System (BACS).

Childcare payments

Care to Learn will pay towards the cost of childcare up to £160 per child per week (up to £175 per child per week if the young person lives in London). The contribution to childcare costs will be paid directly to the Childcare Provider each month in advance.

The scheme will support childcare hours in reasonable excess of learning hours to allow time for travel between the Learning Provider and Childcare Provider and any private study time undertaken, within the maximum weekly amount.

Retainers can be paid to Childcare Providers for the time between the end of one learning period and the beginning of another (for example during half term break). A summer retainer, to keep the childcare place open over the summer holiday period, must be applied for separately (see page 18 for details).

Deposits of up to £250 per child can be paid to the Childcare Provider, if required. The amount of deposit will be deducted from the first month's childcare payment. In the unlikely event that the first month's childcare payment is insufficient to support the deduction of the full deposit, the balance will be deducted from the second month's childcare payment. The Childcare Provider cannot have the deposit offset against the final weeks of the payment plan.

Registration fees of up to £80 per child, charged by the Childcare Provider, will be funded through the scheme. Such fees are not deducted from future childcare payments.

Childminder network/broker payments

A one-off £100 childminder network/broker payment will be made for each application supported by a network/broker that results in a young person starting their chosen course or learning programme. This is dependent on that network/broker providing at least three of the five services listed below, and being recognised by their local authority, Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, or Family Information Service, or the National Childminding Association.

The five services are as follows:

- Brokerage, in terms of providing a list of available childminders. This would also involve using knowledge of the childminder and their arrangements to explain alternative provision to the young person.
- Matching, to help the young person identify a suitable childminder who meets their needs and is convenient for travel etc. This may involve visits and discussions.

- Agreeing terms and conditions for the childminding that meet the young person's needs. These would go beyond price alone and include issues such as timing, drop off and collection, diet, routine and behavioural issues. It may also extend to agreeing flexibilities for study, vacations, deposits, retainers, etc. This will ideally be set out in a formal written agreement.
- Using briefings, arranging training and working with Childcare Providers to meet the needs of young people.
- Retaining an ongoing interest in the young person for the duration of the course and assisting where possible in any change of arrangements.

The Childcare Provider will be asked on the application form to make a formal declaration about whether they have been supported by a childminding network/broker service.

Travel payments

Young people may receive help with additional travel costs. The total of the childcare costs and travel costs must not be more than the weekly maximum amount allowed for Care to Learn of £160 per child per week (or up to £175 per child per week in a London borough). The young person should only claim for travel costs that are necessary to take their child(ren) between childcare and home where those costs are **in addition** to their normal travel costs from home to college.

Travel costs will not be paid where the childcare takes place on the same site as the learning.

Learning Providers are asked to confirm that any travel costs agreed are reasonable, based on their local knowledge. If the amount of travel being claimed seems excessive, the Learner Support Service will request additional proof from the Learning Provider.

Travel payments are made to the Learning Provider, which should reimburse the travel payment to the young person, or use it to arrange transport for the young person, as appropriate.

Learning Provider administration payments

A one-off payment of £80 will be made to Learning Providers in respect of each new learner on Care to Learn. Only one payment per student per academic year will be issued.

Payment will be made following confirmation from the Learning Provider that the learner is in attendance.

Recovery of overpayments

Recovery of any Care to Learn payments made as a result of error or fraud will take place as follows:

Overpayments due to Learner Support Service error

Where Care to Learn is paid following an error made by the Learner Support Service, recovery action will be taken in line with the contractual recovery process.

Overpayments due to fraud

Any Care to Learn payments that have been made as a result of fraudulent activity will be recovered. This includes all childcare payments, including deposits, registration fees, retainers (including summer retainers), travel payments, Learning Provider administration payments and broker fees.

Overpayments due to young person/Learning Provider/Childcare Provider error

Where overpayments have been made as a result of error by the young person, Learning Provider or Childcare Provider, recovery action may be taken. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.

Attendance monitoring

Payments for childcare will only be made while the young person is still attending their course and where the child is still in childcare. Both the Learning Provider and the Childcare Provider will be required to return regular attendance monitoring data by completing the Learner Attendance Monitoring form (LAM), or Childcare Attendance Monitoring form (CAM), issued monthly by the Learner Support Service.

Attendance monitoring will need to confirm that the young person and the child are continuing to attend their respective provision. In general young people and their children should attend their provision for all the hours stated in their application form, but we recognise that there will be occasions where this is not possible, for example because of illness or family emergency. For this reason there is no required level of attendance set for this scheme.

Providers should use their discretion to assess the number of absences and the reasons for these when deciding whether or not reasonable attendance has been met and if the young person is still considered to be attending their programme of learning.

Failure to complete and submit attendance monitoring returns will result in childcare and travel payments being withheld.

Learning Providers and Childcare Providers must immediately notify the Learner Support Service if the young person has stopped attending their course or has removed their child from childcare.

Changes of circumstance

The Learner Support Service must be notified immediately where the following circumstances change:

- childcare arrangements – for example, hours of childcare provided, fee rates, new or additional Childcare Provider(s), additional child;
- learning arrangements – for example, hours of learning, course, new or additional Learning Provider(s);
- travel costs between childcare and home – or young person wishes to claim these for the first time;
- Childcare Provider/Learning Provider bank details;
- young person's personal details.

Change of Circumstance forms are available to young people, Learning Providers and Childcare Providers on request from the Learner Support Service.

Summer Retainer

Where learning lasts for more than one academic year, or where the young person is progressing onto a further course or University, a summer retainer can be paid to enable the childcare place to be kept open over the summer holiday period.

The Summer Retainer form is included in the application pack that is sent to all returning students. It must be completed and returned to the Learner Support Service before the end of the summer holiday period for the retainer to be paid. **Completed original forms (not a photocopy) should be sent to the Learner Support Service.**

Complaints and appeals

All complaints and appeals must be made in writing to the Learner Support Service.

If the complaint/appeal concerns operational processes or a complaint about customer service, it will be dealt with by the Learner Support Service in the first instance. If the complaint/appeal is about Care to Learn policy, the Learner Support Service will refer it to the YPLA's Learner Support Directorate for a response.

In the event that a young person is dissatisfied with the way in which their appeal has been dealt with, they may complain to the YPLA's Learner Support Directorate by writing to:

The Correspondence Team
Learner Support Directorate
Young People's Learning Agency
The Straddle
Victoria Quays
Wharf Street
Sheffield S2 5SY

In the event that they are still dissatisfied with the way in which their appeal has been dealt with, the young person may refer to the YPLA's Complaints Procedure. For more information please see the YPLA website at www.ypla.gov.uk/aboutus/contactus/complaints/

Audit Requirements

In recognition of the need to minimise the administrative burden on Learning Providers, YPLA audits of Care to Learn will typically be conducted as an integral part of the existing Assurance and Financial Monitoring Team audits of Learning Providers.

The Care to Learn audit programme will be applied consistently to all Learning Providers and Childcare Providers that have learners/children attracting Care to Learn funding. The audit programme involves the identification and evaluation of the key controls over the management and administration of Care to Learn and the substantive testing of a random sample of learners' payments across a selected period of time (usually a month).

More extensive guidance for Childcare Providers and Learning Providers on the YPLA audit arrangements for Care to Learn, including details of evidence requirements, and feedback and reporting arrangements is set out on the [Care to Learn website](#).

Sources of further information

The Learner Support Service address is:

Care to Learn
Freepost RSLX-CAZR-RHLY
Learner Support Service
BIRMINGHAM
B24 9FD

Learner Support Service **Provider** helpline: **0845 600 7979**

Learner Support Service **Learner** helpline: **0800 121 8989**

Learner Support Service email: C2L@yplalearnersupport.co.uk

Care to Learn website for young people: www.direct.gov.uk/caretolearn

Care to Learn website for Learning Providers, Childcare Providers and other partners: <http://caretolearn.ypla.gov.uk/>

Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Further information about all the forms of support listed below is available on the [Directgov website](#)

- [Free early education places](#)
- [Child Tax Credits](#)
- [discretionary learner support funding](#)
- [Higher Education Childcare Grant](#)
- [Sure Start Maternity Grant](#) and [NHS Healthy Start vouchers](#).
- Benefits such as Income Support are not affected by the receipt of Care to Learn.
- Learning programmes funded by the **European Social Fund (ESF)** should normally have the costs of childcare built into them. However, if this is not the case the learner may apply for support from Care to Learn.

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