

# Childcare Support Scheme

2002/04 pilot

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Guidance for providers



Learning+Skills Council

## Breaking down barriers to learning

Over the academic years 2002/04, a new Childcare Support Scheme will be piloted in schools and sixth form colleges across England.

The scheme will deliver targeted financial assistance to students for whom childcare costs are a barrier to continuing their education. It is part of the commitment of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to increase the proportion of young people participating in structured learning and to raise the achievement of young people. Teenage parents are a particularly vulnerable group.

The pilot childcare scheme replaces arrangements that have existed in previous years for the delivery of childcare support funds. This year individual schools and sixth form colleges have not been issued with a block of their own resources to distribute. Instead, the new system will be centrally administered on a demand basis to optimise the allocation of funds according to need.

This programme will include adults in sixth form colleges but will not affect students in other further education institutions. Those students will continue to receive support from the individual institution they attend under the existing arrangements.

The Childcare Support Scheme is being piloted alongside a Residential Support Scheme.

### **People are eligible to benefit from the Childcare Support Scheme if they:**

- are aged 16 or over;
- attend a full-time or part-time course funded by the LSC in a school sixth form or sixth form college;
- have a dependent child under 15 years of age (or 16 for children with disabilities);
- meet the residence conditions for learner support; and
- are ordinarily resident in England on the first day of the first academic year of the course.

## About the scheme

The Childcare Support Scheme can make available funds for both childcare and travel expenses associated with learners taking their child or children to and from the place of childcare.

A learner could receive up to a maximum of £4,000 per child, per year. A provisional budget of £1.5 million has been agreed for the scheme by ministers.

Applications for support from this scheme will be accepted throughout the 2002/04 academic years. Providing students continue to attend, they will be eligible to receive support for the duration of their course, for up to a maximum of three years.

Learners attending part-time courses may qualify for some proportion of childcare support based on the number of guided learning hours they attend on their course.

Resources are allocated according to need and part of the application process involves assessment of the child's parental income for the financial year ending 5 April 2002.

If total childcare and transport costs exceed the level of support on offer, further assistance is available. For example, help with the balance of transport costs can be obtained from other Learner Support Funds.

The following table shows the level of childcare support that will be available for full-time learners:

Child's parental income	% of childcare support given
Below £30,502	100% up to a maximum of £4,000
£30,502–£35,501	80% up to a maximum of £3,200
£35,502–£40,501	60% up to a maximum of £2,400
£40,502–£45,501	40% up to a maximum of £1,600
£45,502–£50,501	20% up to a maximum of £800
£50,502 and above	Nil

## The application process

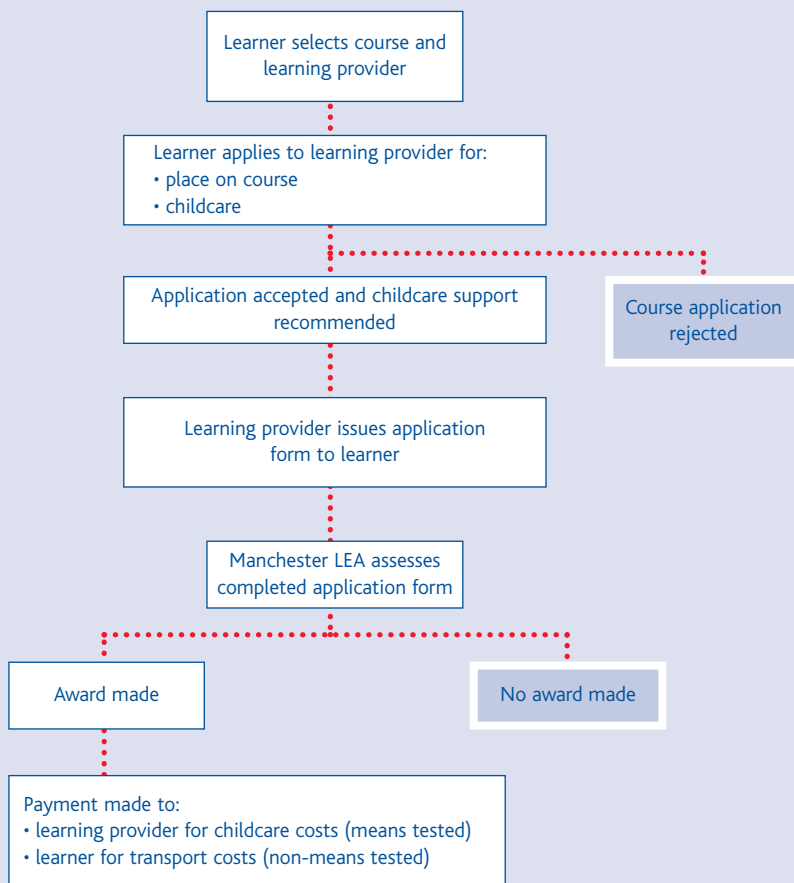
The diagram on the page opposite illustrates the application process. It is described in more detail below.

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The key steps of the application process are:

- Students apply to their school or sixth form college for childcare support.
- The school or sixth form college informally establishes the student's eligibility to receive funds.
- If the school or sixth form college approves the student's application, the student will be given the application form and information about applying. Schools and sixth form colleges can obtain these documents from the LSC website, from their local LSC or from Manchester LEA.
- Completed application forms will be sent to Manchester LEA where they will be assessed.
- If an award is made, it will normally be sent to the school or college the applicant is attending. The institution will then pay the childcare provider direct. In exceptional circumstances, payment may be made direct to the student.

# Overview of the application process



## Funding

A student's application for funds from the Childcare Support Scheme will normally begin as they apply for a place on a course. However, an application can be made at any time over the 2002/04 academic years.

The application form asks for details of the income of the child's parents. If the learner does not live with the child's other parent, only the learner's income details will be required.

If a claim is also being made for travelling expenses, details will be required in the application form.

If students are receiving help with childcare costs from other sources and wish to apply for assistance with the balance, they must give details of the amounts received and who is paying.

The fund may be used for childcare that is charged for but not registered only in those circumstances where suitable registered provision is not available, on the same basis as that for other learner support funds.

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## Further information

It is important that students who need the assistance available through the Childcare Support Scheme are informed that it is available and encouraged to apply. An information leaflet has been produced to explain more about the scheme to learners and will be made widely available.

Information about the Childcare Support Scheme will be available to learners through:

- school sixth forms;
- sixth form colleges;
- Connexions service;
- British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS);
- Brooke Advisory Centres;
- LEA educational welfare services; and
- Sure Start programme co-ordinators.

In addition to the explanatory leaflet, the following printed information is available for applicants:

- notes on applying;
- application form; and
- frequently asked questions.

For advisers or schools and colleges there is also a letter of introduction to both the Childcare and Residential Support Schemes.

All of these documents are available to download and print from the Other Documents section of the LSC website, which you can find at

[www.lsc.gov.uk/documents.cfm](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/documents.cfm)

## Contacts

Manchester LEA will administer the distribution of all funds through the Childcare Support Scheme. All enquiries relating to the scheme or the application process should therefore be directed to Manchester LEA.

Email enquiries can be made at [childcare.edpilot@notes.manchester.gov.uk](mailto:childcare.edpilot@notes.manchester.gov.uk)

Telephone enquiries from advisers or schools and colleges can be made on **0161 234 7028**. The contact number for all public enquiries about the Childcare Support Scheme is **0161 234 7026**.

