



Education
Funding
Agency

16-19 Bursary Fund Guide for 2012/13

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Introduction

1. This guide provides information to schools, colleges, Academies, training providers and local authorities (providers) on the operation of the 16-19 Bursary Fund. It is non-statutory and sets out the arrangements the Secretary of State intends to make under section 14 of the Education Act 2002. It should be read in conjunction with the documents *2012/13 16-19 Bursary Fund Q&A for Providers and Local Authorities* and *16-19 Bursary Fund Examples of Good Practice*.
2. A key priority of the Government is to eliminate the gap in attainment between those from poorer and more affluent backgrounds, and to ensure every young person participates in and benefits from a place in 16-19 education and training. The Government provides funding to tackle disadvantage both through the Education Funding Agency's (EFA) funding formula and through support to help young people meet the costs of participating in education and training post-16.
3. 2012/13 will be the second academic year of the 16-19 Bursary Fund and providers will want to review their initial policies to ensure the funds at their disposal are targeted towards those students experiencing the greatest financial disadvantages and/or course-related costs. Local arrangements should be clearly communicated to prospective and actual students, and criteria for the £1,200 vulnerable groups bursaries should be clear and accurate so that all students in the eligible vulnerable groups are aware of these payments.
4. The criteria for identifying the students eligible for discretionary bursaries because of financial disadvantage or course-related costs should be specific enough to identify those who would not otherwise be able to participate in their chosen course (as a result of, for example, low household income). The amount allocated should be sufficient to enable these students to participate (for example assisting students to get to college, buy a meal whilst there and to help meet the cost of any equipment or clothing for their course).
5. A small emergency fund for exceptional circumstances and late emerging vulnerable learners should also be retained.
6. Only those students in one of the defined vulnerable groups, or experiencing the greatest financial disadvantages and/or course-related costs, should be supported using 16-19 Bursary Funds.

16-19 Bursary Fund

7. The 16-19 Bursary Fund has two elements:

- A bursary of £1,200 a year for young people in the following defined vulnerable groups: in care, care leavers, young people in receipt of income support and disabled young people in receipt of Employment Support Allowance who are also in receipt of Disability Living Allowance.
- Discretionary awards made by providers to young people in ways that best fit the needs and circumstances of their students. Bursary awards should be targeted towards those young people who face the greatest financial barriers to participation; such as the costs of transport, meals, books and equipment.

8. Providers are free to determine the assessment criteria for eligibility for discretionary bursaries and the frequency of payments for all awards.

Eligibility

9. To be eligible to receive a 16-19 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.¹ In general, bursaries should be paid only to young people who have reached the statutory school leaving age. Providers may, in exceptional circumstances, use their discretion to pay bursaries to younger students – for example, if they are following an accelerated programme².

10. Young people should satisfy the residency criteria in the EFA Funding Guidance for 2012/13.³ This document is due to be published in June 2012 and will set out the evidence that is required to confirm eligibility.

11. Young people should be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (e.g. Ofsted). That provision must also be:

- funded by the 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 Students aged 19 and over may be eligible to apply for support from the adult discretionary learner support funds operated by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills:

<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/providers/programmes/ls/>

² This does not apply to 14-16 year olds attending college as part of their Key Stage 4 programme.

³ This guidance can be found at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/studentsupport/funding/b00203354/efa-funding>

12. Bursaries should not be paid to:

- young people on higher education (HE) courses, with the exception of those participating in HE access courses or courses of HE falling within paragraph 1(g) or 1(h) of schedule 6 to the Education Reform Act 1988, provided the courses are funded under the 16-18 Learner Responsive Model⁴;
- young people on waged Apprenticeships;
- young people in prison or a young offender institution or who have been released on temporary licence, for example, day release.

13. Providers should take account of any allowances or other sources of financial support received by a young person when deciding whether to award a bursary, for example:

- Young people attending provision funded solely by the European Social Fund and receiving a training allowance.
- Young people resident in Wales or Scotland, who may be receiving EMA payments via the arrangements in place in the relevant devolved administrations.

Vulnerable young people

14. Young people in the defined vulnerable groups will be eligible for a bursary of at least £1,200 (pro-rata for courses lasting less than 30 weeks a year). Larger bursaries can be paid if the provider considers this necessary to enable the young person to continue in education or training. This group covers young people who are looked after, care leavers, those in receipt of income support and disabled young people in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance.⁵ Providers are responsible for identifying young people who are eligible for this payment. In doing so, they will want to seek appropriate evidence from the young person, bearing in mind confidentiality. The following are examples of appropriate evidence:

- a letter setting out the benefit to which the young person is entitled;
- 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 services⁶.

15. All young people in the identified vulnerable groups will receive their bursary payments from their school, Academy, college, local authority or training provider.

16. The EFA will retain a small contingency, to cover the costs of bursaries for those young people in the defined vulnerable groups in instances where numbers at any one provider are such that the provider's initial allocation is either insufficient to meet the

⁴ Information on this model is included in the funding guidance documents which can be found at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/studentsupport/funding/b00203354/efa-funding>

⁵ Employment Support Allowance is not normally paid to young people in full time education or training unless the young person is also in receipt of Disability Living Allowance. Further information on this criterion is available in the *2012/13 16-19 Bursary Fund Q&A for Providers and Local Authorities*.

⁶ For more information about care status and eligibility refer to the *2012/13 16-19 Bursary Fund Q&A for Providers and Local Authorities*.

guarantee, or meeting the guarantee would result in little or no funds remaining to award discretionary bursaries. 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.

Assessment and payment of bursaries

17. 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 and the nature of their course, it is appropriate to pro-rata the award further for part-time courses.

18. 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.

19. Providers should ensure that their policies with regards to pro-rata awards and the conditions of payment are clear and available to students. These policies should be explained as part of the students' induction.

20. 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 taking account of the purpose of the Bursary Fund. Providers should manage the number and size of discretionary bursary awards to keep within their budget. Providers' total allocations should be targeted towards young people in the vulnerable groups as a priority and then those facing the most significant financial barriers to participation.

21. Providers should assess the young person's actual need for financial assistance before determining whether to award a discretionary bursary and the amount that is awarded. They may decide to take 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. Young people currently or previously in receipt of free school meals are not automatically entitled to receive a bursary, but providers may decide to use eligibility for free school meals as a criteria within their own arrangements.

22. 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.

23. 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.

24. Bursaries should not be used to substitute other sources of financial support e.g. childcare payments made under the Care to Learn scheme, or payments to meet residential costs under a Residential Support scheme. Bursaries should not take the form of regular payments for living costs, which would then be subject to the Social Security Amendment (Students and Income-related Benefits) Regulations 2000.⁷ Receipt of other benefits and financial support does not exclude a young person from receiving a bursary (e.g.: a young person who is receiving support from Care to Learn may also receive a bursary) if he/she is also experiencing financial difficulty with meeting costs associated with learning.

25. In making decisions about the number and size of bursary awards providers should take account of the fact that a student's financial circumstances may change during a programme of study that could lead him or her to drop out of learning. Retaining some funds to meet emerging costs will enable providers to react to such circumstances. Providers may also want to take account of any improvements in a young person's financial circumstances during a programme of study.

26. Bursaries should be sufficient to help young people meet the costs related to participation e.g. meals whilst attending their course, transport, books and equipment, field trips and other course-related costs and may also be used towards the costs of attending university interviews and open days. The use of the 16-19 Bursary Fund to help meet transport costs does not replace the statutory duty on local authorities to set out (in an annually published transport statement) the arrangements they will make to facilitate the participation in education or training of young people of sixth form age. Bursaries to help meet transport costs should be targeted to individual students, where those costs have been identified as a specific barrier to that student's participation.

27. Bursary Funds should not be used by a provider for any purpose designed to give them a competitive advantage over other providers, such as the provision of benefits, gadgets or other financial incentives. Nor should they be used for:

- enrolment or administration fees imposed by the school, Academy, college or training provider;
- fees for access to college facilities;
- block subsidy of canteens;
- block subsidy of transport;
- block provision of equipment, materials or books.

28. It should be clear to young people that they are being supported by the 16-19 Bursary Fund and providers should be mindful of this when considering developing their own financial support branding.

29. It is good practice to pay young people by BACS transfer into their own bank account but providers may also make small cash payments where they consider it appropriate to do so. Providers are free to determine the frequency of payments, taking

⁷ Bursary payments made to young people in receipt of income support and Employment Support Allowance (the £1,200 bursary for the most vulnerable) will be exempt from being taken into account in assessing income-related benefit.

account of: the purpose of the bursary (e.g.: one-off or sustained support); the young person's circumstances; local administrative arrangements; and probity. When determining the frequency of payments, providers may also want to consider how regular payments can support young people's budgeting and development of financial management skills, and differing financial pressures that arise during the academic year e.g. equipment that is needed at the beginning of a course, the timing of school visits, or final year students needing to visit universities.

30. It is also good practice to pay 'in kind' bursaries rather than cash e.g. a transport pass or chef's whites. Such items should be provided to individuals identified as requiring financial support, and in the case of books or equipment that are awarded as a discretionary bursary, they should be returned at the end of the course to enable them to be re-used by other students. In the case of bursaries for students in the defined vulnerable groups, the value of these items and how their cost is deducted from the £1,200 should be made clear to students and those that support them. Providers should consider how best to achieve value for money – for example, by purchasing equipment through existing arrangements with suppliers instead of providing cash for students to purchase equipment themselves, or arranging facilities for students to purchase second hand books and equipment. As set out above, the Bursary Fund should not be used for block purchase, but providers could part-fund any such arrangements using the Bursary Fund for identified individuals.

31. It is considered good practice for providers and the relevant professionals in local authorities to liaise with regards to young people's bursary awards and their Care Plans or Pathway Plans to guard against overlaps or gaps in funding. It should be noted however that bursary payments are intended to support participation-related costs only.

32. In determining arrangements for payment of the 16-19 Bursary Fund providers are subject to equalities legislation, which means that they must not discriminate against their students on the basis of their protected characteristics. They are also subject to the public sector equality duty in section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010. Arrangements must not discriminate against students on the basis of any protected characteristics as set out in equalities legislation.

Allocations to providers

33. All providers have been notified of their Bursary Fund allocation. The funding is for providers to manage at their own discretion, but in line with this Guide.

34. 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 through correspondence;
- a pro-rata vulnerable learner bursary element where appropriate⁸ (for courses of less than 30 weeks) – based on data provided in the 2011/12 in-year MI return;

⁸ As schools, Academies and Independent Specialist Providers generally deliver only full academic year

- 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).

35. We have calculated these three elements separately to ensure that allocations reflect recent evidence of learner need at provider level 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.⁹

36. 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).

37. For all other providers, allocations for the 16-19 Bursary Fund can only be used to support 16-19 year olds as defined in paragraphs 9-13 of this guidance. Funds cannot be used to support adult learners (for which there is a separate Discretionary Adult Learner Support Fund operated by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills) and cannot be vired into the Residential Bursary Fund (if applicable). Providers' use of the 16-19 Bursary Fund is subject to audit.

38. Providers should note that the payment schedule for the 16-19 Bursary Fund in 2012/13 has changed as follows:

Two-thirds (approximately 67%) will be paid in August; the remaining one-third (approximately 33%) will be paid in April 2013.

39. Providers should note that 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.

40. Providers are expected to keep records to demonstrate that they have paid young people in the defined vulnerable groups bursaries of at least £1,200 (pro-rated for courses of less than 30 weeks).

41. Allocations to maintained school sixth forms will continue to be made via local authorities (detailed on local authorities' Annex B), who are asked to pass the identified funding directly to the school, which is then responsible for administering the fund. Local authorities may also be allocated funds, as appropriate, to cover students in other maintained institutions such as Pupil Referral Units, Special Schools and a small number of other providers (detailed on local authorities' Annex C) with whom the EFA does not have a direct funding relationship.

courses; any previously reported pro-rata vulnerable learner numbers have been zeroed. In the majority of cases providers had reported the number of discretionary bursaries, not pro-rata vulnerable learner bursaries.

⁹ Providers are expected to meet as a minimum the number of bursaries for the vulnerable group learners before determining the levels of discretionary awards they can offer.

42. Local authorities are no longer required to pass funding to non-maintained special schools or EFA funded Independent Specialist Providers as these will be funded direct by the EFA.

43. In 2012/13, where a young person with a Learning Difficulty Assessment (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 to access the appropriate support from the 16-19 Bursary Fund for eligible students.

44. Where a provider operates out of more than one location across England, or through sub-contracts, they should ensure that all learners 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.

Communications, governance and monitoring

45. Providers should develop a statement, setting out how they will administer and distribute their funds, in good time to inform young people's consideration of their choices about what and where to learn in the following academic year. The arrangements must be clear and available to prospective and current students and the EFA. 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 should ensure that the information provided to young people through literature and websites is up to date.

46. It is very important that providers work with local authorities and consider innovative solutions to raise awareness of the 16-19 Bursary Fund amongst young people, particularly those in the vulnerable groups.

47. Schools, Academies, colleges and training providers are encouraged to work in partnership with other local providers and the local authority to develop a common approach to administering the 16-19 Bursary Fund, and to take account of the administration advice developed by the Association of Colleges. Providers are encouraged to use these partnership arrangements to identify and disseminate information about the 16-19 Bursary Fund to young people in the defined vulnerable groups; agree the best way to deliver the 16-19 Bursary Fund to these young people (particularly those in care and care leavers); and discuss how the 16-19 Bursary Fund could best be used to address barriers to non-participation at a local level. It is good practice to establish lead contacts, information sharing and joint working protocols to facilitate this.

48. Administration and allocation of bursaries will be subject to the institution's normal governance and audit regimes. If a young person feels aggrieved about how their request for a bursary was handled, they should follow the provider's normal complaints procedure.

49. 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). It is likely that this information will be used to inform the vulnerable learner bursary element of 2013/14 allocations.

50. An **end of 2011/12 year** MI return should also be submitted. Details of the information required was provided to the sector in the 2011/12 16-19 Bursary Fund Q&A for Providers and Local Authorities (<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/studentssupport/funding/a00203061/16-19-bursaries>) and details of how providers will submit this information will be provided separately.

51. 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.

52. Data fields for the 16-19 Bursary Fund are included in the 2012/13 ILR and the school census. Providers should complete the appropriate fields to record details of the bursaries awarded to students in the defined vulnerable groups and for discretionary purposes. The data collected may be used to inform future allocations.

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

54. 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 website](#)¹⁰.

Further information

55. Further information on the 16-19 Bursary Fund will be available on:

- The Department for Education website <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/studentssupport/funding/a00203061/16-19-bursaries>
- Directgov: www.direct.gov.uk/16-19bursary
- The EFA IM Portal: <http://gateway.imservices.org.uk/>

56. Providers should direct all queries about the allocation and administration of the 16-19 Bursary Fund to: 1619bursaryfund.EFA@education.gov.uk

¹⁰ This document can be found at:

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



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