

Care to Learn Provider Guidance 2010/11

Learner Support Programme

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► For guidance

Contents

	Page number
Introduction	02
Background and overview	03
What is Care to Learn?	03
Summary of Changes	04
Eligibility Criteria	05
Introduction	05
Eligibility of the learner	05
Eligibility of the Learning Provider and course	08
Eligibility of the Childcare Provision	09
Application and assessment	11
New for 2010/11	11
Applications	11
Assessment of the learner's eligibility	12
Registration	13
Administration	15
Payments	15
Recovery of overpayments	17
Attendance monitoring	17
Changes of circumstance	18
Length of entitlement	18
Complaints and appeals	18
Audit requirements	20
Sources of further information	24
Annex 1: Links with other support	25
Glossary	27

Introduction

This document has been updated for the 2010/11 academic year (30 August 2010 to 28 August 2011). Do not use this document after the end of August 2011. The guidance within this document is subject to change. Please check the website to make sure that you are using the correct version.

This guidance is aimed at all those involved in the delivery of Care to Learn. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the delivery of Care to Learn and how to get the best from it.

This guidance is not intended to offer definitive advice on every possible situation, but it does offer a framework within which Providers and stakeholders can make sensible decisions based on Care to Learn policy and their own experience of dealing with young parents in learning. Throughout the document the terms 'young parent' and 'learner' are both used to refer to young parents in learning.

There are two telephone helplines to provide support to Providers and stakeholders, and to young people and their parents or carers. These are:

- Learner Support Service Provider helpline: **0845 600 7979**
- Learner Support Service learner helpline: **0800 121 8989**.

For advice on Care to Learn in your region, please contact your YPLA Inclusion Manager.

Providers and other stakeholders can order application packs to distribute to learners. These can be ordered from **0845 602 2260** (please note this is **not** the Learner Support helpline). The reference number for the 2010/11 application pack is **YPLA-P-100005**.

Individual learners can request their own application pack from the LSS by calling the Learner Support helpline on **0800 121 8989**, or they can order a pack online by visiting the Directgov website.

Background and overview

The YPLA administers all existing Learner Support schemes, including those applicable for post-19 learners. The Learner Support schemes are: Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), Care to Learn, Adult Learning Grant (ALG), Professional and Career Development Loans, Residential Support Scheme, Dance and Drama Awards and discretionary Learner Support funding. For more information on Learner Support and the work of the YPLA, you can visit the website at www.ypla.gov.uk/learnersupport

What is Care to Learn?

Care to Learn enables young parents under the age of 20 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 week per child across England/up to £175 in London).

Summary of changes

The key changes for the 2010/11 academic year are as follows:

Change	Brief Description
Organisation	In April 2010 the LSC ceased to exist. Operational policy for all Learner Support schemes, including Care to Learn, transferred to the YPLA.
Childcare	The types of childcare provision that are eligible have been expanded. See page 9 for more details.
Application process	<p>Young parents no longer need to choose their learning or their childcare before they apply. They can apply with just their own details and choose their Learning Provider and Childcare Provider later. See page 11 for more details.</p> <p>Online application form request is available for young parents from the Directgov website. Stakeholders can order a small supply of 2010/11 application packs from YPLA Publications on 0845 602 2260. See pages 2 and 11 for more details.</p>
Administration process	Learning Providers and Childcare Providers are now required to register the learner and their child for Care to Learn. Simply put, the Learning Provider and Childcare Provider are still required to supply the information about course and childcare they used to put on the learner's application form – but after the learner has been assessed for eligibility for Care to Learn. See page 15 for more details.
Payment process	<p>The Learning Provider and Childcare Provider must both register the learner for Care to Learn before any payments – including a registration fee or a deposit – can be released.</p> <p>Failure to complete and submit attendance monitoring returns will result in childcare and travel payments being withheld.</p>

Eligibility criteria

Changes for 2010/11:

- The types of childcare provision that are eligible have been expanded.

Introduction

In order for a learner to receive support from Care to Learn, they, their Learning Provider and their Childcare Provider must meet all the eligibility criteria for this scheme, as outlined in this guidance.

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

- be aged under 20 on the day that their course or learning programme starts;
- be the main carer of their child(ren);
- be living and studying in England;
- meet the residency criteria;
- be attending publicly funded learning other than distance and e-learning courses; and
- be using registered childcare (the registration requirements for Childcare Providers have been updated to include all Ofsted-registered Childcare Providers).

We expect learners to use their entitlement to a free early education place for their child(ren) before applying for Care to Learn. See page 25 for more details.

Eligibility of the learner

Age

The young parent must be under 20 on the date their course or learning programme¹ starts.

Care to Learn funding will not cease when the young parent reaches their 20th birthday, but will continue to the end of the specific course or learning programme stated at registration for Care to Learn.

If the young parent is 19 and their chosen course lasts for more than one year, it is important that the Learning Provider reflects this at registration for Care to Learn and ensures that the correct date for end of learning is used. For example, if a young parent is 19 and wants to study full A-levels, the full A-level must be shown on the Learning Provider Registration Form, rather than just the AS-level studied in the first year.

The young parent will still need to **complete a new application** for each year that they want to claim Care to Learn funding.

¹ A 'learning programme' describes learning that is not a traditional 'course', for example a Connexions Activity Agreement. It does not mean 'a programme of courses', for example GCSE followed by AS-level in the same subject.

Main carer of the child(ren)

The young parent must be responsible for the child(ren) for whom they are claiming Care to Learn. If a young parent loses custody of their child(ren), even temporarily, the LSS 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 (because, for example, they are working, also in learning or absent); and
- the other parent is not claiming the childcare element of Working Tax Credit.

Residency

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

- living in England; and
- 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 parent 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 statuses/conditions applies:

- Asylum seeker under the age of 18;
- Asylum seekers 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 parents 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 parent if any issues are identified.

How will a young parent know their immigration status?

From 25 November 2008, foreign nationals granted leave to remain in the UK (a) as a student, (b) on the basis of marriage/civil partnership/unmarried couple and (c) as dependants of those in category (b) have been issued with an ID card for foreign nationals. This replaced the vignette or sticker that would have previously been placed in the holder's passport. Foreign nationals

granted leave to remain in any other category will continue to have a vignette in their passport.

Asylum seekers often do not have a passport. They are normally granted temporary admission (TA) and issued with a form IS96, which confirms the grant of TA. However, the bearer of a form IS96 may not be an asylum seeker, may have been issued with more than one IS96 at different times or may already have been refused leave to enter the UK and granted TA pending removal. For these reasons an IS96 is unsuitable for use as confirmation of a person's immigration status in the UK.

The UKBA issues an application registration card (ARC) and a standard acknowledgement letter (SAL) to people who claim asylum or make a claim under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights in the UK. Each dependant of an asylum applicant will be given their own card. Where, owing to very exceptional circumstances, an ARC cannot be issued, the applicant will be issued with a SAL. The ARC is a credit-card-sized plastic card that is issued as acknowledgement of those types of application to the UKBA. The card contains details about the identity and immigration status of the holder. The card is used by the holder to access UKBA support (primarily subsistence support).

Residency: important note

Young parents who started their course prior to 1 September 2009, but who do not meet the new criteria, will be permitted to complete their current course and claim Care to Learn to the end of that course.

London weighting

A London weighting applies to Care to Learn. Young parents who benefit will have their childcare, and any necessary additional related travel (between home and the Childcare Provider), paid up to the London-weighted maximum, which for the 2010/11 academic year is £175 per child per week (compared with up to £160 outside London).

Eligibility for London weighting is determined by the young parent's home address. Learners living in any of the London boroughs (inner and greater London) are eligible for the London weighting.

Eligibility of the Learning Provider and the course/learning programme

There are no requirements for course length, duration or level to be eligible for this scheme. Young parents who have been accepted on to a publicly funded programme of learning in England that is not solely distance learning, e-learning or higher education are eligible for Care to Learn as long as they also meet the eligibility criteria listed above.

Courses for which Care to Learn is payable	Courses for which Care to Learn is not payable
Non-accredited day sessions and short courses within the community such as First Aid, Healthy Eating, etc.	Privately funded learning, e.g. at an independent school or other institution where learners 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 not a required part of an agreed course or learning programme.
Work-based learning courses where the learner has ‘non-employed’ status.	Learning where the learner has ‘employed’ status i.e. receives a wage.
Connexions Activity Agreements available in some areas until 31 March 2011.	Distance learning and e-learning courses.
Further education (FE) courses in a higher education (HE) institution – this includes Access courses and diplomas. NB: There are some courses run in HE institutions for which the HE Childcare Grant is not payable. In these instances the LSS should contact the Learning Provider to check the funding stream and if the course is FE-funded Care to Learn will be payable.	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.

<p>Foundation HE courses where they are followed at an FE institution, e.g. BTEC Diploma. If the eligibility of the course is unclear, the LSS will need to clarify this with the Learning Provider. Foundation Degrees are not eligible for Care to Learn.</p>	
<p>Voluntary work placement that is a required part of an agreed course or learning programme.</p>	

Study time and work placements

Learners can claim Care to Learn for independent study time needed as part of their course. The Learning Provider must agree that the hours claimed for independent study are reasonable before specifying them in the box provided on the registration form. This time may be used for completion of coursework, revision or homework but the young parent must still keep within the maximum support allowed of up to £160 per week (up to £175 in London).

Arrangements for study time as part of a course of learning will need to be agreed between the learner and the Learning Provider and input onto the Learning Provider Registration Form.

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.

Eligibility of the childcare provision

Ofsted registration

Childcare provision that is registered with Ofsted is eligible to provide childcare supported by this scheme. This can be delivered by a variety of Childcare Providers, including childminders and day-care Providers.

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.

New for 2010: Following a review of the types of childcare eligible for Care to Learn, it can now pay for:

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

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.

Finding suitable childcare

If a learner needs help finding suitable childcare in their local area, they should call the Affordable Childcare Helpline on **0800 2346 346** or visit their local Family Information Service.

Application and assessment

Changes for 2010/11:

- Young parents apply with just their details; they can choose a Learning Provider and Childcare Provider at a later date.
- An online application form request is available for young parents.

Learners need to apply to receive support from Care to Learn. Payments are made to Childcare Providers on the learner's behalf. The application process for 2010/11 has changed significantly. A summary of the changes is set out below.

New for 2010/11

- Young parents no longer need to choose their Learning Provider or their Childcare Provider before they apply. They can apply with just their own personal details and if they are eligible they will receive a Notice of Entitlement (NoE). We will also send them two registration forms: one for their Learning Provider and one for their Childcare Provider.
- Young parents must take the Learning Provider Registration Form to their chosen Learning Provider. At this point the young parent can also request payment for their additional travel costs, which the Learning Provider will need to verify as reasonable, based on their local knowledge, before sending the registration form to the LSS.
- Young parents must also take the Childcare Provider Registration Form to their chosen Childcare Provider when making arrangements for their childcare. The registration form includes confirmation that the young parent is eligible for support towards their childcare costs of up to £160 per week (up to £175 if the learner lives in London) when they take up a valid learning programme and use valid childcare provision.
- An advantage of this new process is that the learner does not see Childcare or Learning Provider bank details.
- Young parents can now request application forms online from the Directgov website.

Applications

To apply for Care to Learn the learner will need to submit an application to the LSS.

Where learning starts on or after 30 August 2010, the 2010/11 application form should be used. The 2009/10 application form should be used for any learning that starts prior to 30 August 2010.

The learner will need to supply the following information in their application:

- Personal details (for example name, date of birth, address);
- Residency details;
- Details of the children for whom childcare support will be required (name, date of birth);
- If known at the time of application, the name and address of their chosen Childcare Provider.

It is recommended that the learner also supplies details of their Support Worker (if they have one) – for example, name, organisation, address and telephone or mobile number. This will help in dealing with any queries.

The young parent does not need to sign the form or send a copy of the Childcare Provider's Ofsted certificate in with their application.

The completed application form (not a photocopy) should be posted to:

Care to Learn
Freepost RSHC-XEXS-TGXE
Learner Support Service
Darlington DL1 4WD

A pre-paid envelope is provided in the application pack.

The application pack also contains guidance notes to help the learner complete the form. These can also be downloaded online from <http://caretolearn.ypla.gov.uk>

Assessment of the learner's eligibility

The LSS will carry out an assessment of the learner's application to determine their eligibility.

Applicants should expect to receive a decision about eligibility within three weeks of submitting their application.

If the learner is eligible, the LSS will issue a Notice of Entitlement (NoE) to the learner to let them know that they will be eligible for funding if they attend a valid learning course and use a valid Childcare Provider. The NoE will include:

- a learner letter, confirming eligibility:
- Part A: the Childcare Provider letter and registration form; and
- Part B: the Learning Provider letter and registration form.

The Provider letters also confirm that the learner is eligible for support if they undertake a valid course/learning programme and use a valid Childcare Provider.

If the learner is not eligible, the LSS will issue a refusal letter to let the learner know why they are ineligible. The LSS will signpost these learners to further advice and guidance about other forms of support.

Registration

Eligible learners must take Part A: the Childcare Provider letter and registration form to their Childcare Provider for them to complete as outlined below. They must also take Part B: the Learning Provider letter and registration form to their Learning Provider. Again the Learning Provider must complete this, as outlined below.

Childcare Provider registration

Childcare Providers must complete and return a Childcare Provider Registration Form for **each** learner to inform the LSS about the childcare they will provide for that learner. The Childcare Provider letter and registration form include guidance to help the Childcare Provider complete the form.

A brief summary of the information the Childcare Provider needs to supply is:

- Childcare Provider's details;
- childcare dates; and
- childcare costs.

Childcare Providers will be required to supply the LSS with a copy of their Ofsted registration certificate and evidence of their bank or building society account the **first** time they register a learner with the LSS in the 2010/11 academic year.

Learning Provider registration

Learning Providers must complete and return a Learning Provider Registration Form for each learner to inform the LSS about the learner's course/learning programme. The Learning Provider letter and registration form include guidance to help the Learning Provider complete the form.

A brief summary of the information the Learning Provider needs to supply is:

- course name and level;
- course dates;
- number of hours of learning each week; and
- details of the travel costs the learner wishes to claim.

Learning Providers will be required to supply the LSS with evidence of their bank or building society account the **first** time they register a learner with the LSS in the 2010/11 academic year.

The Learning Provider must discuss with the learner details of any travel costs the learner wishes to claim (see page 16 for details about what travel costs could be claimed). The Learning Provider must enter details of the travel costs to be claimed on the registration form and confirm that these costs are reasonable, based on their local knowledge.

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

LSS validation checks

On receipt of completed registration forms from the Learning Provider and the Childcare Provider, the LSS will carry out checks to ensure the Childcare Provider and the Learning Provider and course are valid for this scheme. The LSS will also check to ensure that the childcare hours claimed are reasonable compared to learning hours. If valid, the LSS will issue payment plans to the learner, the Childcare Provider and the Learning Provider (if travel costs are being claimed) to confirm the payment schedule.

Payments will not be made until the LSS have received and validated completed registration forms from the Childcare Provider and Learning Provider.

Late applications and backdated claims

The application process for Care to Learn has been improved for the young parent through the introduction of the NoE. This will enable young parents to submit their applications in good time, as they need only give those details that are easily known to them and the course and childcare information can be supplied at a later date.

If the LSS receives an application **within 28 days** of the learner starting their course or (where childcare starts after the learning begins) the childcare start date, backdated payments will be made to the date the young parent's course or learning programme began or the first date of the childcare.

Where an application is received **outside of the 28 days**, payments will normally be backdated to the beginning of the week in which the application is received.

In exceptional circumstances the YPLA may allow backdating of payments for more than 28 days.

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

Administration

Changes for 2010/11:

- The Childcare Provider and Learning Provider must both register the learner for Care to Learn before any payments – including a registration fee or a deposit – can be released.
- Failure to complete and submit attendance monitoring returns will result in childcare and travel payments being withheld.

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 if the learner 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 for travel between the Learning Provider and Childcare Provider and private study, 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.

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. This is not deducted from future childcare payments.

The Childcare Provider and Learning Provider must both register the learner for Care to Learn before any payments – including a registration fee or deposit – can be released.

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 parent 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 or 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 parent.
- Matching, to help the young parent 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 parent'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 parents.
- Retaining an ongoing interest in the young parent 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

If the costs of childcare are less than the Care to Learn weekly maximum, then the additional travel costs associated with childcare, that is, between home and the Childcare Provider, may also be claimed, but the weekly maximum must not be exceeded. For example, if the learner's normal travel cost from home to college is £4 per week and the learner has to pay a total of £10 per week to also take their child between childcare and home, they should only claim £6 per week from Care to Learn.

Travel costs can be claimed no matter how short or long the distance travelled, but will not be paid where the childcare takes place on the same site as the learning. More details about the duty of the Local Authority concerning transport and access to learning is available in the document *Guidance to Local Authorities in Preparing their Academic Year 2010/2011 Transport Policy Statement*.

Learning Providers are asked to confirm that the travel costs claimed by the young parent are reasonable, based on their local knowledge. If the amount of travel being claimed seems excessive, the LSS will request additional proof from the Learning Provider.

Travel payments are made to the Learning Provider and not directly to the young parent or to other third parties. The Learning Provider should reimburse the travel payment to the young parent, or use it to arrange transport for the young parent, as appropriate.

Learning Provider administrative 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 young parent 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 LSS error

Where Care to Learn is paid following an error made by the LSS, 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 learner/Learning Provider/Childcare Provider error

Where overpayments have been made as a result of error by the learner, 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 learner is still attending their course and where the child is attending the childcare provision. 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), the LSS sends each month.

The attendance monitoring will need to confirm that the learner and the child are continuing to attend their respective provision. In general it would be expected that learners and their children are attending their provision for all the hours stated in their application form, but it is recognised that there will be occasions where it is not possible for the learner and/or the child to attend, for example because of illness or family emergency. For this reason there is not a 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 learner is still considered to be attending their programme of learning.

If the Learning Provider is also monitoring the learner's attendance for EMA or ALG, it is especially important that the distinction between the set levels of

attendance required for those schemes, and a reasonable assessment of the learner's remaining 'on programme' for Care to Learn, is retained.

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 LSS if the learner has stopped attending the course or has removed their child from childcare.

Changes of circumstance

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

Change of Circumstance forms are available to young parents, Learning Providers and Childcare Providers by request from the LSS.

Length of entitlement

An NoE covers the whole or remainder of the academic year, enabling the learner to complete and embark on a new course within the same academic year without being required to submit a new full application.

A new application must be made for each academic year, including where the course recorded on the original application spans more than one academic year. In these cases, the learner will be sent a reminder to prompt them to complete a new application.

If the learner's course spans more than one year, they may apply for a summer retainer to keep the childcare place open over the summer break.

Complaints and appeals

All complaints and appeals must be made in writing to the LSS.

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

In the event that a learner 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 learner 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

Background

The following provides guidance to Childcare Providers and Learning Providers on the YPLA audit arrangements for Care to Learn.

Methodology

In recognition of the need to minimise the administrative burden on Learning Providers, it is proposed that YPLA audits of Care to Learn will typically be conducted as an integral part of the existing Provider Financial Assurance audits of Learning Providers.

A short Care to Learn audit programme has been developed, which will be applied consistently to all Learning Providers and Childcare Providers that have young parents/children attracting Care to Learn funding. The audit programme involves an overview of the key controls over the administration of Care to Learn and testing of a random sample of young parents' payments across a selected period of time (usually a month).

Controls review

Through discussions with appropriate members of staff at Learning Providers and Childcare Providers, YPLA auditors will identify and evaluate controls over the management and administration of Care to Learn payments and complete a short questionnaire. This will help the auditors to establish what controls are in place and how effectively they are working. The controls review will cover:

- general management and administration arrangements for Care to Learn, including details of any off-site provision such as sub-contracting or childminding networks and the recording, input, storage and security of data relating to Care to Learn payment submission and authorisation;
- controls for ensuring that only eligible young parents are registered by the Learning Provider (see 'Eligibility criteria', page 5); and
- controls for advising and reporting to the LSS any factors that may influence Care to Learn payments or corrective actions (see 'Attendance monitoring', page 17).

Applicable to Childcare Providers

- Controls over the submission of completed attendance monitoring data to the LSS confirming that each child is still in receipt of childcare (see 'Attendance monitoring', page 17).
- Childcare Providers should have documented policies and procedures for deposits, retainer fees and/or registration charges to ensure that these rates have been applied consistently throughout the enrolment process for all children.

Applicable to Learning Providers

- Controls over the submission of completed attendance monitoring data to the LSS confirming that each young parent is still attending the learning programme (see 'Attendance monitoring', page 17).
- Controls over the reimbursement of young parents' travel expenses between their home and Childcare Provider (where applicable), such as carrying out regular checks to ensure that each young parent is not in receipt of any other travel support (for example free travel pass, weekly bus pass) and to ensure that the travel expenses claimed by each young parent are reasonable.

Substantive testing

A random sample of audit tests will be carried out and these will cover the same generic areas as the controls review detailed above. The substantive testing will involve reviewing supporting evidence.

The Childcare Provider must have evidence to confirm:

- the existence of child(ren);
- attendance recording and submission to the LSS;
- consistency of deposit, retainer fees, registration and weekly fee charges per child;
- requests for adjustments/recoveries (where applicable); and
- accuracy and reliability of data.

The Learning Provider must have evidence to confirm:

- the existence of the learner;
- the eligibility of the learner (including existence of the child(ren));
- attendance recording and submission to the LSS;
- remittance evidence to demonstrate reimbursement of travel (where applicable);
- requests for adjustments/recoveries (where applicable); and
- accuracy and reliability of data.

Evidence requirements

The following are examples of the evidence that YPLA auditors will expect to see during audits at Childcare Providers and Learning Providers. These are not intended to be exhaustive lists.

Applicable to Childcare Providers

- Original Ofsted registration certificate.
- Attendance monitoring data submitted to the LSS confirming that the child(ren) is still in receipt of childcare.
- Recent invoices and childcare rates to ensure that the young parent is charged the same fees as those charged to other parents.

- Signed declaration statements, where applicable, confirming that the young parent is not receiving funding from any other source – for example, free nursery education places, the childcare element of Working Tax Credits or employed work-based learning status.

Applicable to Learning Providers

- Record the details of documentation used (for example birth certificate, proof of Child Benefit) to verify each young parent's eligibility to receive Care to Learn funding.
- Attendance monitoring data submitted to the LSS confirming that each young parent is still attending the learning programme.
- Documented checks to ensure that the young parent is not double-claiming for travel costs between home and the Childcare Provider if they are in receipt of any other travel support for learning, for example free travel pass or weekly bus pass.
- Remittance notices or statements demonstrating that all due travel payments to the young parent are reimbursed in a timely fashion that does not prohibit the young parent from travelling to their Childcare Provider.

Feedback and reporting

YPLA auditors aim to discuss audit findings with the auditee as the work progresses and usually hold a formal meeting at the end of the fieldwork. As well as detailing any findings, auditors will endeavour to support Providers by giving recommendations for improvement to processes and controls where required.

Part of the rationale for the controls review is to enable auditors to gain an understanding of how effectively Learning Providers and Childcare Providers monitor and reimburse (where applicable) young parents claiming Care to Learn funding. Where errors are found, auditors will try to identify where controls have broken down or failed to operate as intended, so that meaningful and value-added recommendations can be made.

A formal audit report will be issued that covers all the audit work carried out, including Care to Learn payments.

Summary of common pitfalls

A number of recurring issues have been identified at previous audits of Care to Learn, and are summarised below.

- Eligibility checks: Providers do not check that each young parent meets the Care to Learn eligibility requirements as set out in the Care to Learn guidance prior to registering young parents, and/or do not hold documentation to confirm that these eligibility checks have taken place.
- The attendance evidence that should be held by Learning Providers and Childcare Providers is either incomplete or missing.

Sources of further information

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

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

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

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

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

Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex 1: Links with other support

Further information about all the forms of support listed here is also available on the Directgov website (direct.gov.uk).

- **Free early education places.** Parents of all 3-and 4-year-olds, and some 2-year-olds, are entitled to up to 15 hours per week of free early education for their child(ren) which should be accessed before applying for funding from Care to Learn. Young parents may apply for Care to Learn for support to cover any extra hours (over and above their free entitlement) to complete their course. For example, if the child has a free early education place at a nursery for 12.5 hours per week, but childcare is needed for 28 hours to enable the young parent to attend the Learning Provider and complete their course, only 15.5 hours of childcare fees can be claimed from Care to Learn. For further information about the free early education entitlement, contact the Family Information Service on **0800 234 6346**.
- The young parent must not be in receipt of funding for childcare from another source, for example where they or their partner are in receipt of the childcare element of **Working Tax Credits**.
- 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 young parent may apply for support from Care to Learn.
- Where a young parent starts a course aged under 20, but turns 20 during their course, they will continue to receive Care to Learn support until the end of that particular course. If they plan to go on to a further level or course they then need to seek financial support for childcare from other sources – for example, if they plan to study at a college or school sixth form, they should talk to the student support officer at the college or school about **discretionary Learner Support (20+ Childcare)**. More information on this is available to Providers from ypla.gov.uk/learnersupport/. Learners moving on to HE may apply for the Higher Education Childcare Grant through Student Finance England. More information about this is available on the Directgov website or by calling the helpline on **0845 300 5090**.
- Young parents aged 16–18 may also be eligible for **EMA** where they could receive up to £30 per week. As parents themselves, only their own income will be taken into account for assessment, not that of their parents or carers. More information on EMA is available to Providers from ypla.gov.uk/learnersupport/ or from the LSS Provider helpline on **0845 600 7979**, and to individual learners from the LSS learner helpline on **0800 121 8989**.

- Young parents who are 19 at the start of their learning may also be eligible for ALG. More information on ALG is available to Providers from www.ypla.gov.uk/learnersupport/ or from the LSS Provider helpline on **0845 600 7979**, and to individual young parents from the LSS learner helpline on **0800 121 8989** or the Careers Advice Service on **0800 100 900**.
- Benefits such as Income Support are not affected by the receipt of Care to Learn.
- Young parents on a low income may also be eligible for a **Sure Start Maternity Grant and NHS Healthy Start vouchers**. Healthy Start vouchers towards purchasing fresh fruit and vegetables are received automatically by under-18s when they are pregnant.
- Young parents on an 'employed' status work-based learning programme (such as an Apprenticeship) are not eligible for Care to Learn as they can claim the childcare element of Working Tax Credits.

Glossary

Academic year: for the purposes of administering Care to Learn, the academic year is defined as 30 August through to 28 August. Academic years are written as 2010/11 and financial years as 2010–11.

Activity Agreements: available until December 2010 through Connexions in some areas for 16-and 17-year-old children who are not in education, employment or training. They are offered a weekly allowance in return for committing themselves to a plan and completing agreed activities.

CAM: Childcare Attendance Monitoring Form that the Childcare Provider must complete and return each month to confirm to the LSS whether the learner's child is still in their care, or has been withdrawn.

Care Leaver: a young person aged 18-21 who has been looked after for 13 weeks or more since the age of 14 and who have ceased to be looked after/accommodated.

Childcare Provider: a provider of childcare – for example, childminder, nursery, playgroup.

Childcare Provider Registration Form: 'Part A: Childcare Provider Registration Form' is sent to the learner with their NoE, for them to take to their chosen provider to complete. The form has an NoE letter attached to it confirming that the learner is eligible for support and giving helpful information about the next steps to take.

Childcare Register: the Ofsted register for Childcare Providers providing care for children aged over 5 but under 8. It is split into two parts: the compulsory part for those Childcare Providers who must register, and the voluntary part for those Childcare Providers who do not have to register but wish to do so.

Early Years Register: the Ofsted register for Childcare Providers providing care for children aged up to 5 years.

European Economic Area (EEA): consisting of the member states of the EU (see below) plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

European Social Fund (ESF): set up to improve employment opportunities in the EU and so help to raise standards of living. It aims to help people fulfil their potential by giving them better skills and better job prospects.

European Union (E U): the member states are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany,

Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom (including Gibraltar).

LAM: Learner Attendance Monitoring Form that Learning Provider must complete and return each month to confirm to the LSS whether the learner is still in learning, or has withdrawn or completed.

Learner Support Directorate: the part of the YPLA responsible for managing Learner Support schemes, including Care to Learn and EMA.

Learner Support Service (LSS): the body responsible for assessing applications, paying appropriate funds to interested parties and providing a telephone helpline service to young parents and stakeholders.

Learning Provider: an organisation providing courses and/or training such as a school or college.

Learning Provider Registration Form: 'Part B: Learning Provider Registration Form' is sent to the learner with their NoE, for them to take to their chosen provider to complete. The form has an NoE letter attached to it confirming that the learner is eligible for support and giving helpful information about the next steps to take.

London: Learners living in the following London boroughs are eligible for the London weighting: 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.

Notice of Entitlement (NoE): the letter issued to a young parent informing them that they are eligible for support.

Ofsted: the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. It inspects and regulates care for children and young people, and inspects education and training for learners of all ages.

Payment plan: this is issued to the young parent and the Childcare Provider and confirms the amounts to be paid each week for childcare.

Stakeholder: any organisation or individual with an interest in Learner Support, including learners, Learning Providers, partners and government departments.

Summer retainer: young parents on Care to Learn who are following a course that spans two academic years can apply for payments to keep a childcare place open over the summer holiday break.

Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA): one of the successor bodies to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Responsibility for Learner Support transferred from the LSC to the YPLA on 1 April 2010.

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