

# Student Financial Support Funds 2020-21 Policy

## Policy Aim

Leeds City College is committed to promoting the practice of equality and social mobility by ensuring student financial support funds are made available to assist disadvantaged students, and those who are facing financial hardship with course-related costs, in order to overcome barriers which may prevent them from taking part in or continuing in learning and accessing educational, and progression opportunities.

The college is also committed to promoting the safeguarding and welfare of young people and vulnerable adults, including providing targeted support to those who are most in need through the student funds specified, ensuring that students have access to opportunities and the support they require to continue in learning and progress.

This policy describes the student funds available to Further Education students. Higher Education student financial support is outlined in the college's Access Agreement.

The policy should be read alongside the procedures available on the Student Finance/Student Funds intranet page which outline a number of related processes. Refer to: <https://bit.ly/2IONemP>

## Applies to:

- Leeds City College

## CHANGE CONTROL

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<b>Policy will be communicated via:</b>	College Website, Intranet, staff and student induction, staff and student training, employer handbook, contracts and service specifications	
<b>Next review date:</b>	January 2021	

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## **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

Leeds City College promotes equality, diversity, inclusion and social mobility by using student financial support funds to remove financial barriers to learning, which may prevent students from enrolling, fully participating, completing and progressing from courses. We recognise the positive impact of education on the lives of our students and promote the full participation in course related activities and college enrichment programmes.

## **2. POLICY AIMS**

2.1. This policy seeks to ensure that:

- Student funds are distributed in accordance with the regulations and guidelines laid out by funding agencies;
- Administration of student financial support funds meet the needs of students and remove financial barriers to learning;
- Systems are in place to administer, record and monitor funds, ensuring that funds are used for their intended purposes.

## **3. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES**

3.1. Leeds City College receives allocations of funding annually to provide financial support for Further Education students from Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Leeds City College administers the funds received from ESFA and distributes them to provide financial support in order to overcome barriers, which may prevent beneficiaries from taking part in or continuing in learning and accessing educational opportunities.

3.2. This policy covers the following student financial support funds, which are available to eligible students. Students who apply for any of the funds will be assessed individually and awarded support based on their individual financial need. Refer to Appendix 1 for details of the Awards.

### **3.2.1. 16-19 year old students (or with EHCP)**

- 16-19 Discretionary Bursary;
- Free College Meals;
- Care to Learn;
- 16-18 Priority Fund.

### **3.2.2. 19+ (AEB) students**

- 19+ (AEB) Discretionary Learner Support;
- 20+ Childcare (part of 19+ (AEB) Discretionary Learner Support);

### **3.2.3 Advanced Learner Loan students**

- Access to HE students in receipt of an Advanced Learner Loan;
- Advanced Learner Loans students (non Access to HE);
- 20+ Childcare - (Advanced Learner Loans Bursary).

3.3. The purpose of the funds is to:

- Assist eligible students to take part in or continue in learning. Students in receipt of funds are encouraged, supported and expected to attend all of their classes

- (including attending English and mathematics);
- Support retention and progression enabling students to achieve qualifications and progress into further learning, work or apprenticeships.

#### **4. MAIN ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

4.1. The college provides two forms of financial support to students.

- 4.1.1 Leeds City College ESFA student funds will provide support for travel, childcare and meals in accordance with the terms set out in this policy;
- 4.1.2 Support for equipment, uniform, books, professional membership fees, educational, UCAS fees or employability related visits, enrichment activities and any other course-related costs may also be made available by curriculum departments. Refer to Departmental pages for details of the support available.

4.2. Students must satisfy **all** of the following criteria for access to Student Funds:

- A “home student” who meets the residency requirements;
- Meet the age requirements of the fund;
- Be enrolled on an approved Government funded programme (ESFA, European Social Fund (ESF), publicly funded, traineeship programme);
- Be on a full-time course and or substantial part-time course (5 hours and above including any mandatory placements);
- Be in receipt of income assessed state benefits/ tax credits (including Universal Credits) or have an annual gross household income, for the 2019/2020 tax year, which runs from 6 April 2020 - 5 April 2021, of :
  - £26,000 or below (19+, AEB);
  - £22,000 and below (16-19); for household incomes between £22,001 and £26,000, travel help only;
  - Free College Meal entitlement.

Exceptional circumstances will be considered individually based on information provided. No exceptional travel payments will be made by the Student Funds Team until a signed assessment has been submitted confirming eligibility.

4.3. The college reserves the right to apply discretion to ensure that individual students' needs and personal circumstances are taken into account when decisions are made.

4.4. Curriculum departments will publish a curriculum funds statement outlining support available for kit, equipment, uniform, visits and trips, UCAS fees or other course related costs for students in individual course areas. The curriculum funds have the same eligibility criteria as the main ESFA funds. Individual support for students will be supplemented with departmental resources.

Curriculum departments should use LSF/Bursary eligibility as an indicator when assessing student support needs.

The ESFA funding rules state that essential kit and equipment must be provided by

curriculum departments as part of the course offer.

4.5. In addition to the college administered funds, students can apply for Care to Learn (childcare costs for under 20 year olds) and the Priority Fund (weekly payments to bank accounts for students aged 16, 17 or 18 at the start of the course who are a child looked after by the Local Authority, or are Care Leavers, or are in receipt of Income Support or Employment Support Allowance and Personal Independence Allowance in their own right).

## **5. TERMS AND IMPLEMENTATION**

5.1. Leeds City College strives to achieve the most effective use of ESFA funding to support the maximum number of eligible students. Students with an annual gross household income, for the 2019/2020 tax year, which runs from 6 April 2020 - 5 April 2021, of:

- £26,000 and below (19+, AEB);
- £22,000 and below (16-19); for household incomes between £22,001 and £26,000 travel help only;
- Free College Meal entitlement.

It is important for assessors to distinguish between Free College Meal entitlement and discretionary meal support. Refer to Appendix 1.1. for details of the income evidence required for Free College Meal entitlement.

5.2. Where a student is aged 19 or over on 31 August 2020 and is dependent on another adult in one household, awards may be made on a discretionary basis. Due to the limited nature of the fund, payments are not guaranteed but applications are welcomed. This fund provides help for students from low income households. Applications are income assessed, based on the supporting evidence submitted with the application. Refer to Appendix 1.2 for details of income levels and documents which are acceptable as proof of income and household circumstances.

5.3. Where a student is aged 23 or over, they will be assessed on their own income even if they are living within a household. Refer to Appendix 1.3 for details of income thresholds for Access to HE students with an Advanced Learner Loan and other Advanced Learner Loan students.

5.4. Applications are accepted in the online application system. In exceptional circumstances paper applications can be submitted.

5.5. The guiding principle for distributing the funds is to provide support in the form of goods or services including travel passes, food from college catering outlets, sanitary protection and childcare. These are the factors identified as barriers to learning by students. In some exceptional circumstances, such as a safeguarding risk, and at the college's discretion, students may be paid by BACS payment (money direct to students' bank account). There is a maximum limit to such payments. Refer to Appendix 1 for details.

5.6. The effective use of the funds will be monitored and evaluated through:

- Internal audit – annual;
- ESFA audit and annual returns;
- Student focus groups and feedback;
- Student survey;
- Effectiveness of forecasting and budgeting monitored in performance review;
- Feedback from and consultation with staff;
- Annual review of this policy.





- 5.7. An emergency fund will be made available to provide financial support to students who need short term help or face crises such as providing a student with a bus pass to get home. In these exceptional cases the fund use will be recorded on student records, however depending on circumstances, a full application may not be deemed necessary or appropriate.
- 5.8. The college will ensure effective management and systems of financial control are in place, funds are used for intended purposes and compliance with the ESFA guidelines. A student will only be awarded student financial support funds if they have provided a completed application form and the required evidence that proves their eligibility for the relevant fund. Support will be provided from the date a fully completed application form and supporting evidence as required is received by the Student Financial Support team. Each application to the fund will be individually assessed. All assessors must complete the Student Financial Support training before carrying out assessments.
- 5.9. Eligibility for student financial support does not give students an automatic entitlement to receive it. Students will be made aware that funding is limited and offered on a first come first served basis and during the year if it is necessary to introduce an application deadline, the date will be published.
- 5.10. The college will promote financial support funds using a range of methods including via school liaison activities, college website, marketing material and internal communication with students. The College will make student financial support funds information accessible for students to clarify the eligibility criteria and the application processes to enable students to fulfil their responsibility regarding the collection, completion and return of application forms with the appropriate required evidence and documentation.
- 5.10. Students will be advised of the outcome of their application **within 12 working days**. The college will reserve the right to recover funds (where appropriate) including equipment and travel passes from any student who withdraws from college or those who made a false application. Students are expected, encouraged and supported to attend 100% of all their classes. This includes English and maths classes, work placement and any timetabled events. The college will monitor student attendance and attitude to learning and may make changes to the amount of financial support to ensure it is used effectively. A minimum attendance of 90% is expected to continue receiving support, however the college will apply discretion to promote retention and accommodate students' individual needs. Bursary funding should not be stopped if the learner is engaged, partially engaged in learning or is likely to reengage in learning. Coaching tutors should make a recommendation to the Student Funds team about individual students.
- 5.11. Eligibility for funds is determined by assessment of income against criteria outlined in the application procedure (refer to Appendix 1 for full details). College staff are trained to make assessments and sign the application form to indicate that evidence has been seen. The ESFA will carry out checks on student eligibility so it is vital that all assessments are correct and the evidence of income is correctly recorded.
- 5.12. The college will work with internal and external professionals to identify and support students who are eligible for the Priority Fund and Care to Learn, maximizing

uptake of these. Children looked after are eligible for travel and meal awards in addition to the Priority Fund.

## **6. APPEALS**

All awards are made in accordance with the terms of this policy. If a student disagrees with the award decision, the process to appeal this is:

- Students should discuss their application with their department's administrative staff and / or their coaching or personal tutor to understand why their application was unsuccessful.
- If a student feels an unfair decision has been made, they should state their reasons in writing to the Student Funds Manager, who will review the application.
- The final stage of appeal is in writing to the Head of Student Engagement who will make a final decision.

## **7. RESPONSIBILITY**

The responsibility for this policy rests with the Head of Student Engagement and the Student Funds Manager is responsible for its implementation. Refer to Appendix 2 for details of the Policy Decision Making Framework.

## **8. RELATED DOCUMENTS**

This policy should be read with reference to the following documents available of the staff intranet or from the Student Funds team:

- Student Funds Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ);
- Student Funds Processes;
- Student Funds application form.

## **9. WHO WILL NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS POLICY**

The following stakeholders need to know about this policy:

- Students, parents and carers, local authority, government agencies: Information for students and the general public about the Student Funds will be provided on the college website, prospectus, student intranet, leaflets, posters and during admissions process;
- Heads of department, coaching tutors, curriculum administrators, Student Life teams, MIS and finance managers, Directors and Executive Leadership Team: All documents are available on the staff intranet (departmental pages). Staff briefings will be held at key points of the year including training sessions. Annual consultation on policy.

## **10. REVIEW**

The Student Financial Support Funds 2020-21 Policy will be reviewed biannually and the next review date is January 2021. A new policy will be published annually.

## **11. APPENDICES**

## **12. GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

## APPENDICES

### ADDITIONAL NOTE IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

We acknowledge that the college has responded to the impact of Covid-19 and college closure through a series of measures put in place. These include the issuing of supermarket vouchers in place of meal cards and curriculum driven applications for Hardship Fund.

Without certainty for the 2020/21 Academic year the policy will stand as written but with the note for a flexible approach and updating as is fit. Temporary arrangements may need to be considered including:

Travel - In the event that attendance is limited a decision to issue travel daily passes rather than annual passes will be taken.

Meals - Where students are eligible for meals and not able to be in college, supermarket vouchers to the value of £2 per day will be issued

Childcare - This will be reviewed in line with government guidance of lockdown measures.

Careful monitoring of budget will be conducted to allow for the diversion of funds where required.

### APPENDIX 1

#### Appendix 1.1. 16-19 Discretionary Bursary and Free College Meals eligibility

##### 16-19 Discretionary Bursary

To be eligible for the 16-19 Discretionary Bursary, students must:

- be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2020;
- aged 19 or over if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers') or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- be a 19+ continuer, this must be the same programme they started before they turned 19), as long as their eligibility continues and their institution considers they need the support to continue their participation.
- on a course funded directly by ESFA or by ESFA via a local authority.
- on a course funded or co-financed by the European Social Fund.
- on a course otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including level 3) accredited by Ofqual or on the ESFA list of qualifications approved for funding 14 to 19.
- on a 16 to 19 traineeship programme.
- meet the residency criteria in ESFA funding regulations for post-16 provision. This document also specifies the evidence institutions must see and retain for audit to confirm eligibility for post-16 funding.

When making decisions about awarding 16-19 Discretionary Bursary, we will take into account the availability of other financial support for learners. Awards can be made to students in the following circumstances (income thresholds are based on the 2020/2021 tax year, which runs from 6 April 2020 - 5 April 2021):

- Students in receipt of income assessed state benefits, or named on the evidence as a dependant of a person receiving such benefits.

- Students living in a household with a gross annual income of £22,000 or below for travel and meals, and £22,001-£26,000 for travel only;
- Students with a gross annual income of £17,004, based on the Social Mobility Commission's low pay threshold of £8.07 per hour in 2016 and on the assumption of a 37.5hr contract with paid statutory holiday entitlement) or less per year if a single person living independently.
- Students with an annual gross income of £7,400 or less per year if single, not living independently but within a household such as with parents, carers, relatives or friends.
- Students, who do not have their own income, must demonstrate how they are being financially supported. If they are living in a household, they are expected to provide evidence of the household income.
- If a student appears to be living on nil income, it is unlikely that they will be able to sustain themselves on the course. It is important that they seek advice about how they will support their day to day living costs while studying. It is beyond the scope of the fund to support students' living costs. When choosing to study, the individual needs to consider if they have made reasonable provision for their living costs, either through entitlement to benefits, employment or support from the household they are part of.

For discretionary support for 16-19 year olds, the following documents are acceptable:

- Current Tax Credit Award Notice for the current financial year (Full letter with all pages); provisional tax credit awards and annual reviews must be accompanied by an up to date bank statement;
- Current Universal Credit Notice for the current financial year (Full letter with all pages);
- Current (income assessed) Benefit Claim letter – dated within the last 3 months;
- Letter from Benefit Agency confirming receipt of benefit – dated within the last 3 months;
- Letter from Local Authority confirming Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit – dated within the last 3 months;
- Bank statements dated within the last 3 months indicating regular payments from the Benefits Agency;
- Wage slips (minimum of 2 monthly/8 weekly payslips) dated within the last 3 months;
- Proof of recent tax return if self-employed;
- Other evidence may be requested to establish proof of income and household circumstances.

### **Free School Meals**

To be eligible to receive free meals, student must meet the age, course and residency eligibility criteria for 16-19 bursary fund and must also provide one of the following documents (income thresholds are based gross household income for the 2020/2021 tax year, which runs from 6 April 2020 - 5 April 2021):

- income support;
- income-based Jobseekers Allowance;
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA);
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 the guarantee element of State Pension Credit;
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC));
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit;

- Universal Credit, with 'take home pay' of £616.67 or less recorded on the statement (if the pay is above this amount on one statement, but will go down, an average can be calculated from future statements).

**Please note that it is vital that assessors correctly record students who are eligible for Free College Meals and those who are eligible for discretionary meals.**

All awards in the table below apply to eligible students aged 16-19:

Award	Details
<p><b>1. Travel Passes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Eligible students will be issued with the most cost effective travel pass available. In the vast majority of cases this will be an electronic annual First bus M ticket or equivalent travel pass.</li> <li>● For eligible students who are 16-18 years old on 31st August 2020 and living in an area of West Yorkshire covered by First Bus or Arriva students will be supported with travel passes. To qualify for help with travel costs, a student must live 1.5 miles or over from their campus of their study and within the Leeds Local Authority area. The student's home address is used and <b><i>the shortest walking routes calculated on Google Maps.</i></b></li> <li>● For eligible students who are 16-18 years old on 31st August 2020 and living outside the Leeds Local Authority area, a contribution of £287 (the equivalent to the cost of an annual First bus pass) will be made towards Metro travel. If a student requires Metro travel then the student's curriculum department will meet the additional cost over and above the £287 contribution. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Exceptions to this will be considered on a case by case basis; for example if a student is a looked after child or care leaver or has safeguarding, health or other personal issues, e.g. childcare. A medical letter or another relevant supporting letter and a statement from a tutorial staff member must be provided in support of the application when the assessment is completed.</li> <li>□ Exceptions to this will also be considered where the course is not offered at a local college.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Exceptional travel: In order to consider exceptional circumstances, a medical letter or another relevant supporting letter and a statement from a tutorial staff member must be provided in support of the application when the assessment is completed. No exceptional travel payments will be made unless a signed assessment has been submitted confirming eligibility with the supporting documents. Exceptional travel payments are capped at £750 p.a.</li> <li>● A student will be provided with smart code (electronic tickets) to ensure best value for money and efficiency in using travel support. However one of the following will be available if students have specific reasons for not using an electronic ticket: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ First paper pass;</li> <li>□ Arriva travel card;</li> <li>□ Transdev travel card;;</li> <li>□ Exceptional Travel – In exceptional circumstances (safeguarding, health or other</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



**2. Meals and subsistence**

- Eligible students can access meals at college food service outlets using the cashless meal card.
- Only students who attend two sessions or more spanning a meal break per day or who attend college 5 hours or more per day are eligible for food.
- A cashless meal card is provided to spend up to £2.75 for each day the student is required to attend college during term time.
- Food service outlets will provide a meal deal to the value of £2.75. Students may choose from other food items, however these must have nutritional value and the card will exclude sweets, chocolate, snacks and any canned drinks. Fruit juice as part of a meal deal is allowed. Water is made available.
- Supermarket vouchers are available for students on work placement including supported internships to an equivalent of £2.50 for each day. These must be requested by tutors at least **two weeks** prior to the start of the placement to allow for administration and issue. Refer to the 'Issuing Vouchers Procedure' for details of the process for issuing and recording the issue of vouchers.

<p><b>3. Priority Fund (16-18 year olds only)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Priority Funding is an entitlement for Students aged 16, 17 or 18 at the 31 August 2020 who are a child looked after by the Local Authority, or a Care Leaver, or are in receipt of Income Support or Employment Support Allowance and Personal Independence Allowance in their own right.</li> <li>● The bursary, to a maximum of £1,200 pa, is paid in addition to other Student Fund awards. Payment may be proportionate to the need or programme of study. Although a young person may be eligible for a bursary because they are in one or more of the defined vulnerable groups, their application may be rejected because they do not have any actual financial need. This might be because their financial needs are already met and/or because they have no relevant costs. Institutions can refuse a student's application on this basis. Similarly, students should only receive the amount they actually need to participate and not automatically receive £1,200 if they do not need the full amount.</li> <li>● Payments are made on a weekly basis to student bank accounts by BACS.</li> <li>● Additional evidence is required, for example, for students who are in care or a care leaver, written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority is required. All evidence must be collected and retained.</li> <li>● The college will seek to identify and encourage applications to the Priority Fund by all eligible students.</li> <li>● The Care Experience Team, designated Care experience leads, coaching tutors, curriculum admin teams, the welfare and student funds team will collaborate to identify eligible students and maximise uptake of the Priority Fund.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Emergency Fund</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Emergency Fund is short term and in place to assist students experiencing a sudden, unexpected and emergency situation, which may impact on their studies. This is also to promote the safeguarding and welfare of young people and vulnerable adults.</li> <li>● Refer to the Student Fund - Emergency Fund Procedure 2020/21 for detailed information.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Hardship Fund</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Leeds City College Hardship Fund is in place to assist students who are experiencing exceptional hardship or a domestic emergency. The funds are limited and awards are made within the constraints of the budget available.</li> <li>● Hardship Funds are assessed by the Welfare Officers. Students must be accessing all the benefits they are entitled to before a hardship payment will be considered;</li> <li>● For young parents receiving Care to Learn Funding the College can award additional funding.</li> <li>● Refer to the Student Fund - Hardship Fund Procedure 2020/21 for detailed information.</li> </ul>

<p><b>6. Childcare – Care to learn</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students who are under 20 years of age are provided with assistance to apply for the Care to Learn Scheme to cover childcare costs.</li> <li>● The college will seek to identify and encourage applications to the Care to Learn Scheme by all eligible students.</li> <li>● The college Childcare Advice Officer will promote Care to Learn funds, maximise the uptake and monitor students in receipt of the fund.</li> <li>● If the Care to Learn Funding does not cover all reasonable childcare costs additional funds can be applied for from the Discretionary Fund.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Digital Support</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We recognise the issue of financially disadvantaged households and are committed to removing barriers to learning and digital marginalisation.</li> <li>● Students can apply for the loan of digital devices (Chromebook) which can be taken and used at home.</li> <li>● This will be supplied via the department but funded through the discretionary fund to be used to complete their course.</li> <li>● At the end of the course they can apply to keep the device with the agreement of the department.</li> </ul>

## **APPENDIX 1.2. 19+ (AEB) Discretionary Learner Support Fund**

When making decisions about awarding 19+ (AEB) Discretionary Learner Support Funds, we will take into account the availability of other financial support for learners.

Awards can be made to students in the following circumstances:

- Students in receipt of income assessed state benefits, or named on the evidence as a dependant of a person receiving such benefits.
- Students living in a household with a gross annual income of £26,000 or below;
- Students with a gross annual income of £16,009.50, based on the Social Mobility Commission's low pay threshold of £8.07 per hour in 2016 and on the assumption of a 37.5hr contract with paid statutory holiday entitlement) or less per year if a single person living independently.
- Students with an annual gross income of £7,400 or less per year if single, not living independently but within a household such as with parents, carers, relatives or friends.
- Students, who do not have their own income, must demonstrate how they are being financially supported. If they are living in a household, they are expected to provide evidence of the household income.
- If a student appears to be living on nil income, it is unlikely that they will be able to sustain themselves on the course. It is important that they seek advice about how they will support their day to day living costs while studying. It is beyond the scope of the fund to support students' living costs. When choosing to study, the individual needs to consider if they have made reasonable provision for their living costs, either through entitlement to benefits, employment or support from the household they are part of.

The following are acceptable proof of income and household circumstances for assessing applications for financial support:

- Current Tax Credit Award Notice for the current financial year (Full letter with all pages); provisional tax credit awards and annual reviews must be accompanied by an up to date bank statement;
- Current Universal Credit Notice for the current financial year (Full letter with all pages);
- Current (income assessed) Benefit Claim letter – dated within the last 3 months;
- Letter from Benefit Agency confirming receipt of benefit – dated within the last 3 months;
- Letter from Local Authority confirming Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit – dated within the last 3 months;
- Bank statements dated within the last 3 months indicating regular payments from the Benefits Agency;
- Wage slips (minimum of 2 monthly/8 weekly payslips) dated within the last 3 months;
- Proof of recent tax return if self-employed;
- Other evidence may be requested to establish proof of income and household circumstances.

All awards in the table below apply to eligible students aged 19+ (AEB):

Award	Details
<p><b>1. Travel Passes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Eligible students will be issued with the most cost effective travel pass available. In the vast majority of cases this will be an electronic annual First bus M ticket or equivalent travel pass.</li> <li>● For eligible students, who are 19 years old or over on 31st August 2020 and living in an area of Yorkshire covered by First Bus, Arriva, Trans Dev or Metro, supported with travel passes is available. A student must live 1.5 miles away or more from their campus of your study, <b><i>the shortest walking route as worked out on Google Maps</i></b>, to qualify for travel support.</li> <li>● Exceptional travel: Exceptions to the above will be considered on a case by case basis; for example if a student has safeguarding, health or other personal issues, e.g. childcare. In order to consider exceptional circumstances, a medical letter or another relevant supporting letter and a statement from a tutorial staff member must be provided in support of the application when the assessment is completed. No exceptional travel payments will be made unless a signed assessment has been submitted confirming eligibility with the supporting documents. Exceptional travel payments are capped at £750 p.a.</li> <li>● A student will be provided with smart code (electronic tickets) to ensure best value for money and efficiency in using travel support. However one of the following will be available if students have specific reasons for not using an electronic ticket: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ First paper pass;</li> <li>□ Arriva travel card;</li> <li>□ Trans Dev travel card;</li> <li>□ Exceptional Travel – In exceptional circumstances (safeguarding, health or other personal issues), metro travel vouchers or travel payments may be awarded based on the number of days the student is in college. Provision for Access to HE students who are car users will be made under the exceptional travel proviso.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Payment for exceptional travel is by BACS up to a maximum of £750 and is at the discretion of the Student Funds Manager.</p>
<p><b>2. Meals and subsistence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Eligible students can access meals at college food service outlets using the cashless meal card.</li> <li>● Only students who attend two sessions or more spanning a meal break per day or who attend college 5 hours or more per day are eligible for food.</li> <li>● A cashless meal card is provided to spend up to £2.75 for each day the student is required to attend college during term time.</li> <li>● Food service outlets will provide a meal deal to the value of £2.75. Students may choose from other food items, however these must have nutritional value and card will exclude sweets, chocolate, snacks and any drinks. Water is made available.</li> <li>● Supermarket vouchers are available for students on work placement including supported internships to an equivalent of £2.50 for each day. These must be requested by tutors at least <b>two weeks</b> prior to the start of the placement to allow for administration and issue. Refer to the 'Issuing Vouchers Procedure' for details of the process for issuing and recording the issue of vouchers.</li> </ul>

<p><b>3. Equipment, kit and visits</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Eligible students can be supported with course related books, kit, equipment, uniforms, protective clothing, UCAS fees, educational or employability related visits, co-curricular activities and any other relevant course-related costs.</li> <li>● These costs are covered directly by curriculum departments for all students according to the curriculum funding statement. Departmental curriculum funding statements will be available by 01 June 2020. This statement includes a list of items which are course requirements. This information will be made available to students to ensure transparency of processes as well as clarity of communication and expectations.</li> <li>● Departments will distribute equipment and kit in a timely manner to ensure no student is disadvantaged or prevented from participating fully in the course.</li> <li>● Where appropriate departments may part fund items or loan items to students.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Emergency Fund</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Emergency Fund is short term and in place to assist students experiencing a sudden, unexpected and emergency situation, which may impact on their studies. This is also to promote the safeguarding and welfare of young people and vulnerable adults.</li> <li>● Refer to the Student Fund - Emergency Fund Procedure 2020/21 for detailed information.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Hardship Fund</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Leeds City College Hardship Fund is in place to assist students who are experiencing exceptional hardship or a domestic emergency. The funds are limited and awards are made within the constraints of the budget available.</li> <li>● Hardship Funds are assessed by the Welfare Officers. Students must be accessing all the benefits they are entitled to before a hardship payment will be considered;</li> <li>● Refer to the Student Fund - Hardship Fund Procedure 2020/21 for detailed information.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Childcare – Care to Learn</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students who are under 20 years of age on 31 August 2020 are provided with assistance to apply for the Care to Learn Scheme to cover childcare costs.</li> <li>● The college will seek to identify and encourage applications to the Care to Learn Scheme by all eligible students.</li> <li>● The College Childcare Advice Officer will promote Care to Learn funds, maximize the uptake and monitor students in receipt of the fund.</li> <li>● If the Care to Learn Funding does not cover all reasonable childcare costs additional funds can be applied for from the Discretionary Fund.</li> </ul>

**8. Childcare –  
Age 20+**

- Students who are over 20 years of age can apply for assistance with childcare costs for their timetabled classes on a term-time only basis using the childcare application form. Students must provide a childcare quote form and copies of their income evidence and birth certificate (s) with their application form.
- Leeds City College will work with childcare providers who are OFSTED registered and sign our service level agreement to support students with their childcare arrangements, and funding.
- Students must use the free early education entitlement (FEEE) for childcare in the first instance.
- There is a limited fund and each department is allocated a differentiated proportion of the total funds. Students must therefore apply early. Not all eligible students will be awarded support with childcare. Students will be prioritised according to whether they are in receipt of any of the following benefits:
  - Income Support;
  - income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;
  - income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
  - support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
  - the guaranteed element of Pension Credit;
  - Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190);
  - Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit;
  - Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get);
  - Progressing students previously in receipt of the Care to Learn fund;
  - Students previously in receipt of the Guaranteed Bursary/Vulnerable Bursary or Priority Fund.

Students must also provide evidence of the child/children through a birth certificate or details of the child/children on a Child Tax Credit Award notice.

- The maximum contribution of £7,000 may be received per student for childcare costs.
- Payments to childcare providers are capped at £55 (including VAT) for a full day and £30 (including VAT) for half a day.
- Detailed childcare support processes are set out. Childcare is high cost support and requires contractual arrangements to be in place between childcare providers and the college.
- Students must not assume childcare will be awarded, and any costs incurred are the responsibility of the student unless there is written agreement from the Student Funds team that payment will be made.
- Some childcare funding will be retained for students enrolling during the academic year.
- Refer to the childcare processes 2020/21 for detailed information including priorities for childcare support, maximum amount per student. There are restrictions on the fund, and each case is assessed individually.

Exceptions to the eligibility criteria will be considered on a case by case basis according to individual circumstances.





<p><b>9. Fees</b></p>	<p>In exceptional cases, if a student is not eligible for a government or AEB fee waiver (students with an income of less than £17,004 annual gross salary, based on the Social Mobility Commission's low pay threshold of £8.07 per hour in 2016 and on the assumption of a 37.5hr contract with paid statutory holiday entitlement) or has no or little income, the Learner Support Fund (LSF) will consider supporting eligible students with fees. Examples of exceptional cases would include the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Asylum seekers;</li> <li>● A student with no independent income in a low income household;</li> <li>● A student with no recourse to other funds.</li> </ul> <p>Students must submit their 'Assistance with Fees' application form to their Head of Department who will sign to agree student fee requests where appropriate. Signed application forms with income evidence must be saved in the appropriate folder on the P drive and the information recorded on the Assistance with Fees google sheet. Only Level 2 courses and below are eligible.</p>
<p><b>10. Digital Support</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We recognise the issue of financially disadvantaged households and are committed to removing barriers to learning and digital marginalisation.</li> <li>● Students can apply for the loan of digital devices (Chromebook) which can be taken and used at home.</li> <li>● This will be supplied via the department but funded through the discretionary fund to be used to complete their course.</li> <li>● At the end of the course they can apply to keep the device with the agreement of the department.</li> </ul>

### **APPENDIX 1.3. Students with an Advanced Learner Loan**

Financial support is available to **all Advanced Learner Loan students on an Access to HE course** provided they are:

- A “home student” who meets the residency requirements;
- Meet the age requirement of the fund (19 years old or older on 31 August 2020);
- Studying on an Access to HE course for the first time and do not already have a level 3 qualification or above;
- Be enrolled on an approved Government funded programme (ESFA, European Social Fund (ESF), publicly funded, traineeship programme);
- Be on a full-time course and or substantial part-time course (5 hours per week and above including any mandatory placements);
- Provide the letter evidencing they have an approved Advanced Learner Loan.

There is no income threshold and students are assessed based on the criteria above only due to students being educationally disadvantaged.

Financial support is available to **all Advanced Learner Loan students not on an Access to HE course** provided they are:

- A “home student” who meets the residency requirements;
- Meet the age requirement of the fund (19 years old or older on 31 August 2020);
- Be enrolled on an approved Government funded programme (ESFA, European Social Fund (ESF), publicly funded, traineeship programme);
- Be on a full-time course and or substantial part-time course (5 hours and above including any mandatory placements);
- Be in receipt of income assessed state benefits/ tax credits (including Universal Credits) or have an annual gross individual income of :
  - below £25,000.

All awards in the table below apply to eligible students Access to HE students with an Advanced Learner Loan and other Advanced Learner Loan students

Award	Details
<p><b>1. Travel Passes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Eligible students will be issued with the most cost effective travel pass available. In the vast majority of cases this will be an electronic annual First bus M ticket or equivalent travel pass.</li> <li>● For eligible students, who are 19 years old or over on 31st August 2020 and living in an area of Yorkshire covered by First Bus, Arriva, Trans Dev or Metro, supported with travel passes is available. A student must live 1.5 miles away or more from their campus of your study, <b><i>the shortest walking route as worked out on Google Maps</i></b>, to qualify for travel support.</li> <li>● Exceptional travel: Exceptions to this will be considered on a case by case basis; for example if a student has safeguarding, health or other personal issues, e.g. childcare. In order to consider exceptional circumstances, a medical letter or another relevant supporting letter and a statement from a tutorial staff member must be provided in support of the application when the assessment is completed. No exceptional travel payments will be made unless a signed assessment has been submitted confirming eligibility with the supporting documents. Exceptional travel payments are capped at £750 p.a. Provision for Access to HE students who are car users will be made under the exceptional travel proviso.</li> <li>● A student will be provided with smart code (electronic tickets) to ensure best value for money and efficiency in using travel support. However one of the following will be available if students have specific reasons for not using an electronic ticket: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ First paper pass;</li> <li>□ Arriva travel card;</li> <li>□ Trans Dev travel card;</li> <li>□ Exceptional Travel – In exceptional circumstances (safeguarding, health or other personal issues), metro travel vouchers or travel payments may be awarded based on the number of days the student is in college. Provision for Access to HE students who are car users will be made under the exceptional travel proviso.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Payment for exceptional travel is by BACS up to a maximum of £750 and is at the discretion of the Student Funds Manager.</p>

## 2. Meals and subsistence

- Eligible students can access meals at college food service outlets using the cashless meal card.
- Only students who attend two sessions or more spanning a meal break per day or who attend college 5 hours or more per day are eligible for food.
- A cashless meal card is provided to spend up to £2.75 for each day the student is required to attend college during term time.
- Food service outlets will provide a meal deal to the value of £2.75. Students may choose from other food items, however these must have nutritional value and card will exclude sweets, chocolate, snacks and any drinks. Water is made available.
- Supermarket vouchers are available for students on work placement including supported internships to an equivalent of £2.50 for each day. These must be requested by tutors at least **two weeks** prior to the start of the placement to allow for administration and issue. Refer to the 'Issuing Vouchers Procedure' for details of the process for issuing and recording the issue of vouchers.

<b>3. Equipment, kit and visits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Whilst funding is available, eligible students will be supported with course related books, kit, equipment, uniforms, protective clothing, UCAS fees, educational or employability related visits, co-curricular activities and any other relevant course- related costs;</li> <li>● Access to HE students with an Advanced Learner Loan will be provided with a chrome book to support with their learning;</li> <li>● Departments will distribute equipment and kit in a timely manner to ensure no student is disadvantaged or prevented from participating fully in the course.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Emergency Fund</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Emergency Fund is short term and in place to assist students experiencing a sudden, unexpected and emergency situation, which may impact on their studies. This is also to promote the safeguarding and welfare of young people and vulnerable adults.</li> <li>● Refer to the Student Fund - Emergency Fund Procedure 2020/21 for detailed information.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Hardship Fund</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Leeds City College Hardship Fund is in place to assist students who are experiencing exceptional hardship or a domestic emergency. The funds are limited and awards are made within the constraints of the budget available.</li> <li>● Hardship Funds are assessed by the Welfare Officers. Students must be accessing all the benefits they are entitled to before a hardship payment will be considered;</li> <li>● Refer to the Student Fund - Hardship Fund Procedure 2020/21 for detailed information.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Childcare – Care to Learn</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students who are under 20 years of age are provided with assistance to apply for the Care to Learn Scheme to cover childcare costs.</li> <li>● The college will seek to identify and encourage applications to the Care to Learn Scheme by all eligible students.</li> <li>● The College Childcare Advice Officer will promote Care to Learn funds, maximize the uptake and monitor students in receipt of the fund.</li> </ul>

## 7. Childcare – Advanced Learner Loan

- Students who are over 20 years of age can apply for assistance with childcare costs for their timetabled classes on a term-time only basis using the childcare application form. Students must provide a childcare quote form and copies of their income evidence and birth certificate (s) with their application form.
- Leeds City College will work with childcare providers who are OFSTED registered and sign our service level agreement to support students with their childcare arrangements, and funding.
- Students must use the free early education entitlement (FEEE) for childcare in the first instance.
- There is a limited fund and each department is allocated a differentiated proportion of the total funds. Students must therefore apply early. Not all eligible students will be awarded support with childcare. Students will be prioritised according to whether they are in receipt of any of the following benefits:
  - Income Support;
  - income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;
  - income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
  - support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
  - the guaranteed element of Pension Credit;
  - Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190);
  - Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit;
  - Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get);
  - Progressing students previously in receipt of the Care to Learn fund;
  - Students previously in receipt of the Guaranteed Bursary/Vulnerable Bursary or Priority Fund.

Students must also provide evidence of the child/children through a birth certificate or details of the child/children on a Child Tax Credit Award notice.

- A maximum contribution of £7,000 is available per student for childcare costs.
- Payments to childcare providers are capped at £55 (including VAT) for a full day and £30 (including VAT) for half a day.
- Detailed childcare support processes are set out. Childcare is high cost support and requires contractual arrangements to be in place between childcare providers and the college.
- Students must not assume childcare will be awarded, and any costs incurred are the responsibility of the student unless there is written agreement from the Student Funds team that payment will be made.
- Some childcare funding will be retained for students enrolling during the academic year.
- Refer to the childcare processes 2020/21 for detailed information including priorities for childcare support, maximum amount per students. There are restrictions on the fund, and each case is assessed individually.

Exceptions to the eligibility criteria will be considered on a case by case basis according to individual circumstances.

## **8.0 Digital Support**

- We recognise the issue of financially disadvantaged households and are committed to removing barriers to learning and digital marginalisation.
- Students can apply for the loan of digital devices (Chromebook) which can be taken and used at home. This will be supplied via the department but funded through the discretionary fund to be used to complete their course.
- At the end of the course they can apply to keep the device with the agreement of the department.
- Students in receipt of ALL will be given a digital device of a Chromebook

## APPENDIX 2 - Policy Decision Making Framework

Staff Members	Responsibilities
<p><b>Curriculum schools School administration/services teams or coaching tutors</b></p>	<p>Advise students how to access the online application form, complete it and submit it.</p> <p>Identify children looked after and care leavers, raise their awareness of Priority Fund and encourage them to apply.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances, paper forms can be issued and must be checked to ensure the form has been fully completed and signed by the student.</p> <p>Check the income evidence and complete the assessment.</p> <p>Scan in papers forms and save in the relevant campus/centre folder on the P drive (in the Learner Support Applications Folder).</p> <p>Provide access to sanitary protection</p> <p>Issue 20+ childcare application forms. Check completed forms, childcare quote forms and income evidence, then tick the check boxes and sign and date the front of the application form.</p> <p>Scan childcare applications and supporting documents to <a href="mailto:childcarefunding@leedscitycollege.ac.uk">childcarefunding@leedscitycollege.ac.uk</a> or advise the student to scan in the documents and email to the childcarefunding email address.</p> <p>Refer complex cases / appeals to Student Funds Manager.</p> <p>Issue travel passes and meal cards. Relevant recording of information.</p>



<b>Heads / Deputy Heads of Department</b>	<p>Determine the equipment and uniform requirements for all students on each course.</p> <p>Identify suppliers and agree purchase arrangements with college finance team.</p> <p>Develop processes for ordering equipment and uniform on behalf of all students.</p> <p>Arrange any supplier presence during enrolment / induction.</p> <p>Submit departmental claim to LSF for reimbursement as advised.</p> <p>Sign to agree assistance with fees for eligible students who are not eligible for fee waivers.</p>
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<b>Coaching Tutors/Pastoral Staff</b>	<p>Direct students to the online application form.</p> <p>Identify children looked after and care leavers, raise their awareness of Priority Fund and encourage them to apply.</p> <p>Agree the exceptional circumstances for paper applications.</p> <p>With paper forms, check the form has been fully completed and signed by the student.</p> <p>Check income evidence and complete the assessment.</p> <p>Scan in paper forms and save in the relevant campus/centre folder on the P drive (in the Learner Support Applications Folder).</p> <p>Review travel plans where necessary.</p> <p>Promote take up of the funds.</p> <p>Provide information and advice.</p> <p>Refer complex cases/appeals to the Student Funds Manager.</p> <p>Deliver tutorial activities around financial capability and advise students how to open bank accounts.</p> <p>Review progress and inform students and Student Funds team if discontinuing support or if the student's attendance falls below the expected level.</p> <p>Relevant recording on ProMonitor.</p>
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<b>Student Funds Coordinator</b>	<p>Administration of the funds.</p> <p>Oversee the recording awards and payments made on ProSolution student record.</p> <p>Provide information for reports for budget holder and funding bodies.</p> <p>Oversee exceptional travel and Priority Fund payments and claims.</p> <p>Ensure any benefits for withdrawn students are cancelled where appropriate.</p> <p>Oversee the raising of goods receipt orders for travel passes and meal vouchers and oversee the distribution of supplies.</p>
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<b>Finance Team</b>	<p>Make BACS and faster payments on the instruction of the Student Funds team.</p> <p>Process all third party childcare suppliers. Business partner service.</p> <p>Approve procurement / approved supplier arrangements.</p> <p>Establish payment arrangements with suppliers of equipment and uniform.</p>
<b>Front of House/Reception Teams</b>	<p>Maintain a small emergency fund for each campus or centre including travel passes. Issue to students according to the Emergency Funds Procedure.</p> <p>Provide students with access to sanitary protection.</p> <p>Record fund use on the Emergency Funds Google Sheet.</p> <p>Answer queries and advise students on the application process and submission of supporting documents for student funds.</p>
<b>Welfare Co-ordinator / Advisers/ Childcare Advice Officer</b>	<p>Knowledge of the criteria and application process for funds to advise students, curriculum and school services staff on processes.</p> <p>Identify children looked after and care leavers, raise their awareness of Priority Fund and encourage them to apply.</p> <p>Issue 20+ childcare application forms. Check completed forms, childcare quote forms and income evidence.</p> <p>Relevant recording on ProMonitor.</p> <p>Negotiation of childcare places and relationship management with childcare providers. Childcare advice officer will approve invoices for payment.</p> <p>Assess students for hardship support and recommend additional financial support where appropriate.</p>
<b>Welfare Co-ordinator</b>	<p>Co-ordinate enrolment, induction and student finance information and advice.</p> <p>Sign post to specialist help and support.</p>

<b>Student Funds Manager</b>	Approve emergency hardship float replenishment and monitor emergency hardship awards.  Recommend exceptional awards that exceed specified limits.
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	<p>Manage appeals process. Respond to complex queries and appeal letters.</p> <p>Ensure service standards are achieved.</p> <p>Implement the Student Funds Marketing and Communication plan and ensure maximum uptake of student funds. Raise awareness of Priority Fund and development strong links with the Care Experience Team, designated Care Experience Leads, the welfare team, coaching tutors and curriculum admin teams to ensure all eligible Priority Fund students access the Priority Funds.</p> <p>Monitor the day to day funds and produce monthly and quarterly reports.</p> <p>Approve goods receipt orders for travel passes and meal vouchers</p> <p>Provide information for forecasts.</p> <p>Monitor levels of spending and student characteristics on each fund.</p> <p>Carrying out the childcare assessments and approve childcare agreements.</p> <p>Plan and deliver training through the year for all staff involved in Learner Support Fund activities.</p> <p>Approve requests for hardship payments/support.</p>
<p><b>Head of Student Engagement</b></p>	<p>Manage the fund budget.</p> <p>Approve the fund forecasts, ensure maximum spending on each fund.</p> <p>Provide reports to governors, sign off funding body returns.</p> <p>Preparing performance review and business planning reports.</p> <p>Final decision making for appeals.</p> <p>Student Financial Support Fund Policy owner.</p>

<b>Director of Student Life</b>	Maintain oversight of effective use of the funds to promote social mobility and ensure financial barriers to participation in learning are overcome.
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## Glossary of Terms and Definitions

<b>WORD/ACRONYM</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
AEB	Adult Education Budget
DELT	Executive Level Team
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
ESF	European Social Fund
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency
SFA	Skills Funding Agency
ESA	Employment and Support Allowance
FEEE	Free early education entitlement
LSF	Learner Support Fund
FAQ	Frequently asked questions
UC	Universal Credits









