

Student Financial Support and Transport Schemes 2026-27

Review

Formal Review Cycle	Annually		
Latest Formal Review (date)	May 2026	Next Formal Review Due (date)	May 2027
Policy Owner	Campus Principal and Strategic Lead for Students		
Policy Author	Strategic Lead for Safeguarding and Wellbeing		

Approvals

Board of Corp Y/N		Committee		Date Board approved	
ELT Y/N		ELT date approved	5 June 2026	Additional committee	

Publication

Website Y/N		Unify Y/N		Student VLE Y/N		Other	
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Change History

Version	Date Reviewed/ Revised	Description of Change	Reviewed by	Approved by
v.1.3	May 2023	Updated income thresholds	Director of Student Services	VP Curriculum & Student Services
v.1.4	May 2024	Updated income thresholds and include reference to HE & OfS	Director of Student Services	VP Student Services & Community
v.1.4.1	May 2024	Updated to reflect 'Project Simplification' flexibilities	Director of Student Services	VP Student Services & Community
v.1.5	May 2025	Annual review : updates to role titles, eligibility / residency (5.1, 5.1.2); travel in Sunderland (5.2.2.3); childcare caps (5.5.3); Residential Bursary eligibility (5.7.6)	Strategic Lead for Safeguarding and Wellbeing	ELT

V1.6	May 2026	Annual review; updates to role titles; updates to free meal entitlement for adults, adult childcare (5.5.3.3, 5.5.3.9) and Advanced Learner Loan childcare (5.7.3.3) hourly rate increases.	Strategic Lead for Safeguarding and Wellbeing	
V1.7	June 2026	Free meal lunch allowance amended to £5 per day following costing confirmation with finance.	Strategic Lead for Safeguarding and Wellbeing	

Student Support Funds

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1** This policy is a policy of the City of Sunderland College, trading as Education Partnership North East (which includes Sunderland College, Hartlepool Sixth Form College and Northumberland College). These colleges will be referred to as “the College” throughout this document.
- 1.2** A key priority of the Government is to eliminate the gap in attainment between those from poorer and more affluent backgrounds, and to ensure students can overcome financial barriers to education.

2. Scope

- 2.1.** The Government provides funding to tackle disadvantage both through the ESFA’s Funding Formula and through Young Peoples Funding Methodology to help young people meet the costs of participating in education and training post-16.
- 2.2.** Vulnerable Bursary is available for learners aged 16-19 identified in vulnerable group, in or leaving care.
- 2.3.** Adult Education Budget (AEB) Learner Support (LS) is available to provide financial support for learners with a specific financial hardship preventing them from taking part / continuing in learning.
- 2.4.** Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund (ALLB) is available to help vulnerable and disadvantaged loans learners to overcome barriers which may prevent them from taking part in or continuing in learning.
- 2.5.** A Higher Education Travel Bursary is available for HE students who are facing financial barriers in travelling to campus.
- 2.6.** The different funding agencies do have different funding rules and these are identified throughout this document.

3. Aims of the Policy/Underpinning Principles

- 3.1.** The College values diversity and inclusion and is committed to promoting equal opportunities and eliminating discrimination. Therefore, staff will apply and administer this policy fairly and consistently to ensure that there is no discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, young persons in care and care leavers, young carers and care givers, young parents, youth offenders, and those receiving free school meals.
- 3.2.** This policy develops a clear criteria showing how the College will administer and distribute the funds. This information will be available to learners via Student Finance Team, designated virtual learning environments (VLE) and the College website.
- 3.3.** All learners are expected to maintain 100% attendance throughout the duration of their course. Should attendance fall below 90%, bursary awards may be reviewed.
- 3.4.** To inform students of financial support available, the eligibility criteria, the assessment process and ways in which students may appeal decisions made.

- 3.5. Using a fair and consistent assessment process, complete a financial assessment which will identify the learner-specific financial need and highlight any barriers which may prevent the learner from participating in FE before making any financial award.
- 3.6. Aim to allocate support funds in a way which helps as many vulnerable students as possible.
- 3.7. Pay bursary awards in the form of goods or services or one-off or regular payments which are for costs other than living. As payments can affect the level of the learner benefit entitlement, Education Partnership North East will make it clear at the time the payment is made to the learner, for what purpose the payment is given and whether it is one of a series, for services and goods or a lump sum payment.
- 3.8. Consider the availability of other sources of funding to which the learner might be entitled within the assessment process. This includes support funding through DWP, Job Centre Plus and Local Authority, ahead of consideration for the bursaries or support funds and advise that learners exercise their entitlement to other forms of financial support before they pursue an application for bursaries. Learners must inform DWP of any Learner Support Fund payments they are receiving as this may affect their eligibility for state benefit.
- 3.9. Education Partnership North East will make awards to its students in ways that best fit the needs and circumstances of our students. Bursary awards will be targeted towards students facing financial barriers to participation, and allocations will be prioritised as follows:
 - Travel
 - Childcare
 - Meals
 - Books and equipment
 - Trips and visits
 - Help with the cost of UCAS application

4. Responsibilities

Senior Leadership Team

- Ensure the policy reflects the objective the regional economic plan.
- Monitor and review of budget allocation and expenditure.

Strategic Lead for Safeguarding and Wellbeing:

- Ensure the policy follows ESFA funding guidance to ensure funding rules are adhered to.
- Provide budget allocations for each support fund fee type.
- Ensure that the policy addresses the needs of vulnerable students ensuring that financial support is offered to those who need to overcome financial barriers to start or stay in education.
- Ensure financial assessment process is consistent and unbiased and appeals are fair.
- Consider the availability of other funding and how this can be used to support students before using financial support funding.
- Monitor the budget to ensure allocations are met and awards do not exceed the budget.

Student Bursary and Finance Officer:

- Work with curriculum staff to identify course related cost that students may apply for.
- Monitor, manage and report on the financial support applications within remit.
- Take lead on all student finance queries when escalated by the Student Support Officers.
- Ensure reporting to funding bodies is completed in line with timescales set.
- Work with curriculum staff to identify course related cost that students may apply for.
- Quality assure the application process and allocation for their designated remit.
- Carry out support meetings with students in relation to low attendance threshold for childcare criteria.

Faculty Directors/Curriculum Managers/Academic Staff:

- Ensure register data is correct and attendance is marked timely in each lesson.
- Complete withdrawal paperwork accurately and ensure this is completed within agreed timescales.
- Provide course related cost information as per time timeline to allow kit and equipment requests to be processed efficiently.

Student Support Officers:

- Support students with financial applications.
- Promote financial support available to students.
- Maintain high levels of confidentiality and discretion throughout the financial support process.
- Student are paid in accordance with payment schedule and payment decisions are communicated appropriately and within timescales set out in the policy.
- Work closely with curriculum staff, support staff and external agencies to ensure that learners can access their entitlement to help and support.
- Consider other methods of funding to which a student might have access to.
- Assess students on an individual need, considering financial barriers and distance travelled to campus.
- Ensure application, assessment and decision documentation is recorded and stored securely, displaying clear methodology leading to the assessment outcome.
- Collate and escalate all hardship application documentation including evidence and supporting statements. Manage this process, including all student communication, and update Heads of Service when a new application needs to be assessed.

Finance Team:

- To oversee HEP and ALL process.
- To work in collaboration with Student Services teams to ensure fees owed are identified, pursued and paid in a timely manner.
- Work with Heads of Student Services to identify and agree appropriate timescales to process and send out fee invoices.
- Act as a department of escalation in relation to unpaid student residential fees, leading on the fee collection in the event of unsuccessful informal payment reminders from Student Services.

Data and Registry:

- To provide a list of all course fees including full cost courses, detailing eligibility for a fee waiver.
- During student enrolment, make the decision on whether course payment is required.

Personal Development:

- Support students with financial applications.
 - Promote financial support available to students.
 - Support learners with poor attendance and implement strategies and targets to improve attendance.
- Assist students with appeals application.

Information and Registry Services:

- Ensure that ProSolution is fit for purpose and able to store, flag and monitor student financial support data effectively and efficiently.
- Amend and update information fields as required, and in collaboration with student services teams to ensure accurate and easily auditable records.

Head of Future Skills and Careers:

- Coordinate curriculum area awareness of CDF and moneys available to students.
- Act as a link person between curriculum and welfare coordinators to ensure applications for CDF are received and assessed effectively and efficiently.

5. Implementation

5.1 Residency and Eligibility

The residency eligibility criteria for all funding streams are aligned to the residency criteria addressed in the funding regulations documentation provided by ESFA

- Funding Guidance for young people 2026-2027 : [Advice: funding rules for 16 to 19 provision 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK](#)
- Adult Skills Fund: Funding Rules 2026 to 2027 [Adult education and skills funding allocation technical guidance: 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK](#)
- Advanced learner loans funding rules: 2026 to 2027 [Advanced learner loans funding and performance management rules: 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK](#)

5.1.1 Residency criteria are broadly determined by the following statement:

A person on the 'relevant date' who is 'settled' in the UK, and who has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands (that is including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) for the 3 years preceding the 'relevant date'. 'Settled' means having either indefinite leave to enter or remain (ILE/ILR) or having the right of abode in the UK. British citizens and certain other people have the right of abode in the UK:

- i. British nationals who hold a United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland passport
- ii. European Union nationals
- iii. Family members of EEA and Swiss workers
- iv. British Dependent Territory Citizens (now known as British Overseas Territory Citizens)
- v. Those whose passports have been endorsed to show they have right of abode in the UK
- vi. Those who have a certificate of naturalisation or registration as a British Citizen

5.1.2 Advanced Learner Loan students may also qualify if they are:

- a refugee, or the family member of one

- a migrant worker or a frontier worker, or a family member of one
- you're not a UK national but you've lived in the UK for at least 20 years (or at least half of your life)
- you're the family member of someone with 'settled status' in the UK
- under humanitarian protection or a family member of someone who has been granted it
- the child of a Turkish worker
- staying in the UK as a stateless person, or their family member, and your course started on or after 1 August 2018
- granted 'Calais leave' to remain, or the child of someone granted 'Calais leave' to remain - if your course starts on or after 1 August 2020
- a serving member of the UK armed forces, or their spouse, civil partner or a dependent parent or child living with them, doing a distance learning course from outside the UK that started on or after 1 August 2017
- you, your parent or your step-parent have been given indefinite leave to enter or remain as a victim of domestic violence
- you, your parent or your step-parent have been given indefinite leave to remain as a bereaved partner
- you or your family member have been granted leave under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) or the Afghan Citizen's Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)
- you or your family member have been granted leave to enter or remain in the UK under the Ukraine Family Scheme, the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme or the Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme
- you are a Chagossian with British citizenship, or a British citizen who is a direct descendant of a Chagossian

5.1.3 Students must always be enrolled onto an EFA/ESFA/AEB-funded FE learner-responsive programme of study before any support award will be considered.

5.1.4 Students must provide evidence that they meet the specific eligibility criteria for each support fund.

5.1.5 No funding may be vired between the 16-19 Bursary Fund, the Adult Support Fund and the Advanced Learner Loans Bursary.

5.1.6 Students who are studying Higher Education courses or Apprenticeships are not eligible for ALL funding.

5.2. 16- 19 Bursary

5.2.1 Eligibility

Students may be eligible for 16-19 bursary if they meet the following eligibility criteria;

- Aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2026 or
- Aged 19 or over at 31 August 2026 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Aged 19 or over at 31 August 2026 and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers')
- Meet the residency criteria set by DfE (section 4)
- Meet the low household income threshold as set by the College
- Meet the travel criteria set out by the College

An asylum seeker who has not had their application for asylum refused, is eligible to apply.

Students may receive support to help with the cost associated with attending industry placement such as travel, equipment or clothing.

5.2.1a T Level Students - College wide

Students that study and participate in an industry placement are eligible for financial support for any extra travel, kit and subsistence when on placement. This will include payment for meals for the duration of their placement (£4 per day) and travel expenses if they are not already receiving travel support.

5.2.2 Travel

5.2.2.1 Hartlepool Sixth Form College

- Travel is awarded to students who live more than 1 mile from campus with a household income below £30,000. Students who live more than 3 miles from campus may apply if they have a household income below £50,000.
- Travel will be offered in the form a suitable travel pass. A travel pass will always be considered the most appropriate method of support, if a travel pass is not appropriate students may receive a monthly travel allowance. This will be based on individual circumstances in line with bursary criteria. Where appropriate, a bicycle may be provided if a suitable form of transport.
- EPNE will only fund the cheapest mode of transport.
- Travel from rural areas without public transport may be available to learners.
- Students travelling a significant distance to campus or who are required to overcome transport barriers may apply for an enhanced travel payment alongside a bus pass. This payment will be looked at on an individual basis in line with bursary criteria.
- Mileage is paid at 30p per mile.
- Students who are in receipt of Incapacity Benefit or Disability Living Allowance and who enrol on an agreed course and are supported with transport through their Local Education Authority, can receive a College bus pass to allow them to travel independently to their campus of study.

5.2.2.2 Northumberland College

- All 16-19 year olds living in Northumberland must apply for travel through the Northumberland County Council (NCC) Post 16 Travel Department.
- If the student does not meet the NCC Post 16 Travel criteria, they can apply for their travel through the discretionary bursary. In these cases, a financial assessment on household income must be completed and a payment of £50 must be made as a contribution to travel (unless the student applied, paid the £50 and was rejected by NCC).
- North Tyneside Local Authority residents may be eligible for a 50% contribution from the Council towards travel costs. Students can apply for 16-19 discretionary bursary to cover the remaining 50%.
- Students who meet the eligibility criteria for Vulnerable Bursary or Free College Meals (FCM) will receive a waiver for the £50 travel contribution.
- EPNE will only fund the cheapest mode of transport.
- Where appropriate, a bicycle may be provided if a suitable form of transport.
- Students who reside in the England but live in Berwick will be given a travel allowance of £10 per day, via either NCC or 16-19 Discretionary Bursary Fund if eligible.

- Students will be provided with a bus pass for College bus routes and/or monthly allowance for public transport depending upon routes.
- Students who are required to overcome transport and/or personal barriers may apply for an enhanced travel payment alongside a bus pass. This payment or payment in kind will be looked at on an individual basis in line with bursary criteria. This may be for example, an Arriva pass for an adult student that cannot use the college bus and is unable to receive a direct payment.
- Mileage is paid at 30p per mile.
- Students who are in receipt of Incapacity Benefit or Disability Living Allowance and who enrol on an agreed course and are supported with transport through their Local Education Authority, can receive a College bus pass to allow them to travel independently to their campus of study.
- The travel bursary does not replace the statutory transport duty that local authorities have. Students who are eligible for statutory transport support will be required to apply directly to their local authorities. If a student's application is rejected and they can evidence this with a rejection letter, they may apply for discretionary bursary as an alternative.

5.2.2.3 Sunderland College

- Travel is awarded to students who live more than 1 mile from campus with a household income below £30,000. Students who live more than 3 miles from campus may apply if they have a household income below £50,000.
- Travel will be offered in the form of either a monthly allowance, which supports the Anywhere for £1 scheme or a bus pass, depending upon routes.
- Students who are required to overcome transport barriers may apply for an enhanced travel payment alongside a bus pass. This payment will be looked at on an individual basis in line with bursary criteria.
- Mileage is paid at 30p per mile.
- EPNE will only fund the cheapest mode of transport.
- Learners who have an EHCP can apply to Sunderland City Council to support with funds towards taxi transport to and from college. An additional contribution may be awarded by the college to these costs if required, in line with bursary criteria. Students must produce an invoice as confirmation.
- Students who are in receipt of Incapacity Benefit or Disability Living Allowance and who enrol on an agreed course and are supported with transport through their Local Education Authority, can receive a travel support to allow them to travel independently to their campus of study.
- The travel bursary does not replace the statutory transport duty that local authorities have. Students who are eligible for statutory transport support will be required to apply directly to their local authorities. If a student's application is rejected and they can evidence this with a rejection letter, a travel bursary may be awarded, providing they are not in receipt of other forms of subsidised travel.

5.2.3 Childcare

Students aged 16-20 will be eligible for childcare support through Care to Learn www.gov.uk/care-to-learn. Students will apply for childcare directly through the College as part of their bursary application.

Care to Learn will help with cost of students' childcare including

- childcare, including deposit and registration fees
- a childcare taster session for up to 5 days
- keeping childcare places over the summer holidays
- taking the child to their childcare provider

5.2.3.1 Students can receive help in completing childcare applications by booking an appointment with their Intensive Support Officer (ISO), Student Support Officer or their Personal Development Tutor.

5.2.3.2 Subject to availability of funds, a study leave childcare support scheme will be available. This will entitle every childcare-funded student to receive up to 6hrs of funded childcare to be used for extra study/revision activities which are not formally timetabled. These need to be arranged in agreement with their Intensive Support Officer. Evidence of exams or a supporting tutor statement will be required.

5.2.3.2 If student's attendance falls below 90%, the college has the right to withdraw childcare payments. Intensive Support Officers will carry out support meetings with students who fall into this category before funds are withdrawn. In such cases, the student will be expected to pay 100% of the cost of the childcare for the duration of the absence. Students who are continually absent from college and who continue to use their childcare place will have their funding withdrawn.

5.2.4 Kit, Equipment, Books and Trips

Students may apply for assistance with the help of purchasing course related costs to support completing their qualification;

- Kit and equipment
- Uniform and PPE
- Books
- Trips
- UCAS Fee
- Device and software to support studies
- Progression Package to support students in their next steps

For non-essential trip and visits, the student can apply for a contribution to these costs, which will be based upon household income, cost of trip and individual circumstances.

5.2.4.1 A pro-forma will be supplied to each Curriculum Manager for dissemination and will be approved by the Strategic Lead for Safeguarding and Wellbeing, in order for fair and consistent awards to be made.

5.2.4.2 Equipment and books purchased through support funds remain the property of the College and will need to be returned at the end of the period of study.

5.3 Free College Meals

5.3.1 Eligibility

A student may be eligible for Free Meals if they meet the following criteria;

- Aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2026 with a household income under £30,000 or where the household is in receipt of Universal Credit, regarding of earnings.
- Aged 19 or over if and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers') or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with a household income under £30,000

5.3.3 Students will receive funds per timetabled day which will be available to spend in college catering outlets on a meal (cold or hot meal deal, including a drink) for lunch. Funds are topped up on college ID cards daily; all students can top up/additional funds to their cards using the cashless catering system. All bursary students are eligible for a free breakfast.

5.3.4 If College catering facilities and cashless catering are not available, learners will receive awards as monthly payments by BACS.

5.4 Vulnerable Bursary

The Vulnerable Bursary is an award of up to £1200 to students experiencing financial barriers to education and meet the following criteria.

5.4.1 Eligibility

If students meet one or more of the following criteria they can apply for Vulnerable Bursary

- Care Experience Students (Young people defined by ESFA as “in care” and “care leavers” are referred to by EPNE as Care Experience Students.)
- Those receiving Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves or anyone living with them such a child or a partner.
- Those receiving Disability Living Allowance / Personal Independence Payments will also need to be in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit.
- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children that are the responsibility of the local authority. (When a young person reaches legal adulthood at age 18, we must consider their immigration status. If the asylum claim is decided in their favour, they will be eligible to continue to receive support from Vulnerable Bursary until they reach the age limit.

5.4.2 This does not form part of the 16-19 discretionary bursary allocation however the same application process applies. In some cases, a young person might meet the eligibility criteria for a bursary for vulnerable groups but their financial needs are already met, meaning no vulnerable bursary award is required.

5.4.3 Applicants will be required to show proof of current benefit payments. For care experienced students, written confirmation of the applicant's current status will be required from the relevant local authority.

5.4.4 Students identified as vulnerable will be issued a bus pass/travel payments and course equipment (if appropriate) as part of the grant.

5.5 19+ Learner Support Fund

5.5.1 Eligibility

Students may be eligible for 19+ Learner Support Fund Bursary if they meet the following eligibility criteria;

- Aged 19 or over at 31 August 2026
- Meet the residency criteria set out by DfE (section 4)
- Meet the low household income threshold as set by the College
- Meet the travel criteria set out by the College

5.5.1.1 Asylum seekers who meet the eligibility criteria set out by the DfE may apply for Learner Support funds. If awarded, students will receive support in the form of course-related books, equipment or a travel pass. Asylum Seekers will not be given support in the form of cash. Asylum seeker students should attend their nearest campus that offer the course of study.

5.5.1.2 Students completing a Higher Education Course are not eligible to apply.

5.5.1.3 Students who are funded through Advanced Learner Loan may apply for an Advanced Learner Loan Bursary.

5.5.2 Travel

5.5.2.1 Travel may be awarded to students who live more than 1 mile from campus and have a household income of less than £30,000. Students may be eligible if they live less than 1 mile from the campus as it is not deemed a safe walking distance due to poor lighting and pedestrian walkways.

5.5.2.2 Travel will be offered in the form of a suitable travel pass. If a travel pass is not appropriate students may receive a monthly travel allowance to purchase appropriate public transport. This will be paid into their bank by BACS monthly. Students must provide travel tickets as evidence.

5.5.2.3 Students travelling a significant distance to campus or who are required to overcome transport barriers may apply for an enhanced travel payment alongside a bus pass. This payment will be looked at on an individual basis.

5.5.2.4 A private transport allowance will be paid for mileage calculated at 30p per Mile.

5.5.2.5 Travel payments will not exceed £700 per annum (exceptions must be authorised by Strategic Lead for Safeguarding and Wellbeing).

5.5.2.6 Students who are required to overcome transport and/or personal barriers may apply for an enhanced travel payment alongside a bus pass. This payment or payment in kind will be looked at on an individual basis in line with bursary criteria. This may be for example, an Arriva pass for an adult student that cannot use the college bus service and is unable to receive a cash payment.

5.5.3 Childcare

Students aged 20 or under must will be eligible for childcare through Care to Learn.

5.5.3.1 Childcare is available from the 19+ Learner Support Fund Bursary for students who are aged 20 or over.

5.5.3.2 Students must have a household income below £30,000.

5.5.3.3 Childcare provision is offered at a rate of £6 per hour for timetabled hours (a travel allowance will be paid up to a maximum of 1 hour each way)

5.5.3.4 Students who are unemployed must first use their government funded free hours. The College will then contribute toward the remainder.

5.5.3.5 Students who are employed and use their government funded free hours whilst they are at work may receive a contribution toward timetabled hours.

5.5.3.6 Childcare awards are capped at three children per student.

5.5.3.7 Childcare is awarded for children 0-12 years

5.5.3.7 Childcare is capped at £7,000 per annum

5.5.3.8 Childcare Providers must be Ofsted Registered and must supply their Unique Reference Number (URN) before a payment will be made.

5.5.3.9 Subject to availability of funds, a study leave childcare support scheme will be available. This will entitle every childcare-funded student to receive up to 6hrs of funded childcare to be used for extra study/revision activities which are not formally timetabled. These need to be arranged in agreement with the Welfare Coordinators. Evidence of exams or a supporting tutor statement will be required.

5.5.3.10 If student's attendance falls below 90%, the college has the right to withdraw childcare payments. Intensive Support Officers will carry out support meetings with students who fall into this category before funds are withdrawn. In such cases the student will be expected to pay 100% of the cost of the childcare for the duration of the absence. Students who are continually absent from college and who continue to use their childcare place will have their funding withdrawn.

5.5.4 Kit, Equipment, Books and Trips

Students may apply for assistance with the help of purchasing course related costs which are not mandatory to completing their qualification;

- Kit and equipment
- Uniform
- Books

- Trips
- UCAS Fee

5.5.4.1 Pro-forma will be supplied to each Curriculum Manager for dissemination and will be approved by the Heads of Student Services in order for fair and consistent awards to be made.

5.5.4.2 Equipment and books purchased through support funds remain the property of the College and will need to be returned at the end of the period of study.

5.5.4.3 Adult Hardship Fund

Students may be eligible for the Adult Hardship fund to assist with course related costs or barriers to learning.

5.6 Residential Accommodation

Students may be eligible to apply for support towards the costs of residential accommodation if they meet the following criteria;

- Live more than 5 miles from the college campus
- Have a permanent abode that they live at during weekends and college holidays.
- Students may be eligible for up to 90% rent contribution (subject to assessment).

5.6.1 The residential facility is available for students who wish to attend specialist provision at the Kirkley Hall Campus, students must complete an application to live in halls of residence.

5.6.2 A bond of £250 is required to secure a room. This is repayable at the end of the academic year should no damage occur to room or facilities. Students are not able to claim this bond from the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary.

5.7 Advanced Learner Loan Bursary

5.7.1 Eligibility

Students may be eligible to apply for this bursary if they meet the following eligibility criteria;

- Have an Advanced Learner Loan Approved by Student Loans Company (SLC)
- Meet the low household income threshold as set by the College
- Meet the travel criteria set out by the College

5.7.1.2 Bursary payments will not exceed £250 per month for any combination of support.

5.7.2 Travel

5.7.2.1 Travel is awarded to students who live more than 1 mile from campus and have a household income of less than £30,000. Students studying at Kirkley Hall Campus may be eligible if they live less than 3 miles from the campus as it is not deemed a safe walking distance due to poor lighting and pedestrian walkways.

5.7.2.2 Travel will be offered in the form a suitable travel pass. and/or receive a monthly travel allowance to purchase appropriate public transport (depending upon routes). This will be paid into their bank by BACS monthly.

5.7.2.3 Students travelling a significant distance to campus or who are required to overcome transport barriers may apply for an enhanced travel payment alongside a bus pass. This payment will be looked at on an individual basis in line with bursary criteria.

5.7.2.4 A private transport allowance will be paid for mileage calculated at 30p per Mile.

5.7.2.5 Travel payments will not exceed £600 per annum.

5.7.3 Childcare

Students aged 20 or under must apply for childcare through Care to Learn.

5.7.3.1 Childcare is available from the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary for students who are aged 20 or over.

5.7.3.2 Students must have a household income below £30,000.

5.7.3.3 Childcare provision is offered at a rate of £6 per hour for timetabled hours (a travel allowance will be paid up to a maximum of 1 hour for students travelling more than 15 miles)

5.7.3.4 Students who are unemployed must first use their government funded free hours. The College will then contribute toward the remainder.

5.7.3.5 Students who are employed and use their government funded free hours whilst they are at work may receive a contribution toward timetabled hours.

5.7.3.6 Childcare awards are capped at two children per student.

5.7.3.7 Childcare is awarded for children 0-12 years.

5.7.3.8 Childcare is capped at £7000 per annum

5.7.3.9 Childcare Providers must be Ofsted Registered and must supply their Unique Reference Number (URN) before a payment will be made. Payment to family members or friends, or other providers who are not registered by Ofsted will not be considered.

5.7.3.10 Subject to availability of funds, from April onwards, a study leave childcare support scheme will be available. This will entitle every childcare-funded student to receive up to 6hrs of funded childcare to be used for extra study/revision activities which are not formally timetabled. These need to be arranged in agreement with the Welfare Coordinators. Evidence of exams or a supporting tutor statement will be required.

5.7.3.11 If students attendance falls below 90%, the college has the right to withdraw childcare payments. Student Services Team Leaders will carry out support meetings with students who fall into this category before funds are withdrawn. In such cases the student will be expected to pay 100% of the cost of the childcare for the duration of the absence. Students who are continually absent from college and who continue to use their childcare place will have their funding withdrawn.

5.7.3.12 Students progressing onto the second year of their course will be given childcare funding as a priority.

5.7.4 Kit, Equipment, Books and Trips

Students may apply for assistance with the help of purchasing course related costs which are not mandatory to completing their qualification;

- Kit and equipment
- Uniform
- Books
- Essential Trips
- Professional membership fees and any fees or charges due to external bodies.
- Device and software to support studies
- Progression Package to support students in their next steps

For non-essential trip and visits, the student can apply for a contribution which will be based upon household income, cost of trip and individual circumstances.

5.7.5 Learning Support

5.7.5.1 The Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund can be used to help with the cost of 'in learning support' such as teaching assistants or reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

5.7.5.2 As part of the enrolment process students have the opportunity to self-disclose any learning difficulties or differences and discuss potential support needs with members of the College's Learning Support team.

5.7.5.3 Support will be provided based upon an assessment of need carried out by the Learning Support team.

5.7.5.4 Support will follow the Graduated Approach and four part cycle of "assess, plan, do and review" when assessing and reviewing students' progress.

5.7.6 Residential Accommodation

Students may be eligible to apply for support towards the costs of residential accommodation if they meet the following criteria;

- Live more than 5 miles from the college campus
- Have a permanent abode that they live at during weekends and college holidays.
- Students must be enrolled on a full time land-based programme at Kirkley Hall.

5.7.6.1 The residential facility is available for students who wish to attend specialist provision at the Kirkley Hall Campus, students must complete an application to live in halls of residence.

5.7.6.2 A bond of £250 is required to secure a room. This is repayable at the end of the academic year should no damage occur to room or facilities. Students are not able to claim this bond from the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary.

5.8 Residential Bursary Fund (RBF)

5.8.1 Eligibility

The residential facility is available for students who wish to attend specialist provision at the Kirkley Hall Campus. Financial support from RBF may be available to support up to 90% of the cost of accommodation for students who meet the eligibility criteria;

- Aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2026 or
- Aged 19 or over at 31 August 2025 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Aged 19 or over at 31 August 2025 and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers')
- Meet the residency criteria set by DfE (section 4)
- A full-time student
- Meet the household income thresholds as set by the College
- Meet the travel criteria set out by the College.

5.8.2 Students must complete an application to live in halls of residence.

5.8.3 A bond of £250 is required to secure a room. This is repayable at the end of the academic year should no damage occur to room or facilities. Students are not able to claim this bond from the RBF.

5.8.4 Students may also claim for travel, course related costs and free meals from 16-19 Bursary Fund.

5.8.5 Young people on any paid education, training or apprenticeship programmes are not eligible for RBF support.

5.8.6 16-18 year old studying Full Cost courses and students studying a Higher Education course are not eligible for RBF support.

5.8.7 RBF payments for accommodation are made directly to the student's landlord.

5.9 Higher Education Travel

5.9.1 Eligibility

Students may apply for help with the costs of travelling to campus if they meet the following eligibility criteria.

- Are enrolled on a Higher Education (HE) course where course fees are paid directly to EPNE.
- Travel is awarded to students who live more than 1 mile from campus and have a household income of less than £30, 000. Students may be eligible if they live less than 1 mile from the campus as it is not deemed a safe walking distance due to poor lighting and pedestrian walkways.

5.9.2 Travel

5.9.3 Travel will be offered in the form of a monthly allowance or bus pass.

5.9.4 Students travelling a significant distance to campus or who are required to overcome transport barriers may apply for an enhanced travel payment alongside a bus pass. This payment will be looked at on an individual basis.

5.9.5 Northumberland College students can choose to purchase a pass for the College bus services.

5.9.6 Travel payments awarded to learners is subject to available funds.

5.9.7 Students may be eligible for the HE Hardship fund to assist with course related costs or barriers to learning.

5.10. Application and Assessment criteria

All students are required to complete a bursary application.

5.10.1 Students application forms, evidence and payment details are stored securely in an electronic student record. Financial records are held for seven years. Paper applications and evidence are scanned and retained electronically. All paper records are destroyed at the end of the academic year.

5.10.2 Applicants who are unsuccessful will receive an email detailing the reasons for not being awarded. This email will be kept on the student record and all other application details and evidence will be securely deleted. Records will be held for 30 working days after the email is sent to allow for any appeals under the appeals procedure. Application records and evidence will be maintained until the appeals procedure is exhausted.

5.10.3 Students are required to provide proof of address and evidence of household annual salary by supplying a P60 for the tax year, 3 consecutive payslips dated within 3 months and/or 3 consecutive bank statements dated within 3 months of application.

Students who are claiming benefits in their own right, must produce evidence of Income Support OR Universal Credit, or ESA and PIP together. Please see below evidence required.

Free school meals are available to pupils in receipt of, or whose parents are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits. Students applying for free school meals will need to supply evidence using the following:

Income/Benefit	Evidence Required
Annual Salary	P60 for tax year, 3 consecutive payslips dated within 3 months of application.
Income Support	Entitlement / Award letter – dated within the last three months
Universal Credit	Entitlement / Award letter – dated within the last three months
Income based Job Seekers Allowance	Entitlement / Award letter – dated within the last four weeks

Income related Employment Support Allowance	Entitlement / Award letter – dated within the last three months
Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999	Biometric Residence Permits (BRP) Card Home Office Letter
Pension Credit	Guarantee element of Pension Credit
Personal Independence Payment	Entitlement / Award letter – dated within the last three months
Working Tax Credit run on	Working Tax Credit Award Notice. Must be for full year and not partial awards (FULL AWARD NOTICE)
Child Tax Credit	Working Tax Credit Award Notice. Must be for full year and not partial awards (FULL AWARD NOTICE)

5.10.4 Household income is used to assess students. Students must be a permanent resident at the address used in the assessment and must provide evidence to support this. The assessment will consider all income from residents living at this address.

5.10.5 Students must provide suitable evidence to support their application. An award will not be made if insufficient evidence is provided. An email will be sent to students to request any missing evidence required, this evidence must be submitted timely to ensure applications are processed and bursary awards are made. The college will only backdate payments to the date of submission of application with full evidence.

5.10.6 Students aged 19 and over living with parent(s)/carer(s), may be assessed independently. These students must complete an Individual Assessment Declaration Form.

5.10.7 Consideration of dependants is given when assessing household income. Students who are claiming independently but who have dependants themselves receive a reduction of £1000 per dependant from their household income. Where a student is dependent upon parent(s)/carer(s) then again £1,000 per additional dependant is allowed. Where a student is assessed as independent (has completed an Individual Assessment Declaration) but is living with parent(s)/carer(s) there will be no reduction made for additional siblings living in the parental home.

5.10.8 Any students who may be eligible for funding from an external source will be required to access the external fund before any support will be considered. Funding which is provided by an external source will be taken into consideration when making any financial award.

5.10.7 All awards are made subject to the availability of funds. Awards will be made on a first-come first-served basis. Late applications will be considered but cannot be guaranteed to receive funding.

Where students are found to have intentionally given misleading or inaccurate information the College will claim back the award made. Providing false statements may result in the student being sanctioned in accordance with the College Behaviour for Success Policy and/or prosecution.

5.11 Vulnerable Bursary Assessment

5.11.1 Students aged 16–19 who fall into the Vulnerable Bursary award should provide evidence appropriate to their circumstance for example:

- A letter setting out the benefit to which the young person is entitled, including Income Support OR Universal Credit, or ESA and PIP together.

Written confirmation of the young person's current or previous care experienced status from the local authority which looks after them or provides their leaving care services.

5.11.2 Students entitled to the Vulnerable Bursary award who are studying less than 30 weeks a year will be awarded on a pro rata basis up to the sum of £1,200. This fund will be assessed to determine that the requested

moneys are for genuine need and in line with the government's guidelines that awards should only be made if it is to overcome barriers to education.

5.12 Payments

5.12.1 All Student Support Fund cash payments will be paid by BACS to the student's bank account, except in exceptional circumstances where a student is unable to administer their own account. If the student cannot manage their own funds, we must see Power of Attorney (POA) documentation and the POA must complete a POA Declaration Form.

5.12.2 Students will be paid on 21st of each month.

5.12.3 Childcare providers will be paid on the 21st of each month.

5.12.4 EPNE has high expectations and requires students to maintain 100% attendance. Awards may be reviewed if attendance drops.

5.13 Appeals

5.13.1 Funding Appeals

5.13.1.1 All applicants have the right of appeal. Any student wishing to appeal should write to the Strategic Lead for Safeguarding and Wellbeing within 10 working days of being notified of the initial outcome, stating clearly the reasons for appeal and giving any additional details about the circumstances the student thinks should be taken into consideration.

5.13.1.2 Students may receive support with completing appeal paperwork from a member of the Students Union, College Intensive Support Officer (ISO), Personal Development or curriculum staff.

5.13.1.3 Appeals will be considered by members of the Funding Appeals Panel.

The College Funding Appeals Panel will consist of 3 or more staff from the following:

- Associate Principal/Campus Principal
- Strategic Lead for Safeguarding and Wellbeing
- Student Bursary and Finance Officer
- College Manager

Notification of the outcome of the appeal will be within 10 working days of the panel meeting taking place.

5.13.2 Payment Decision Appeals

5.13.2.1 Students wishing to appeal a payment decision can do so by completing a Payment Appeals Form which will be reviewed monthly by a panel consisting of:

- Student Finance and Bursary Officer
- College Support Managers
- College Curriculum Manager

5.13.2.2 Students who disagree with the outcome of the appeal and believe that their application has not been assessed in accordance with the policy, can then follow the formal complaints procedure.

6. Associated Documents

Please see above.

Residential Bursary Fund Guide (RBF) [Residential Bursary Fund: 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK](#)

7. Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually in line with the guidance published by the ESFA in the associated documents in section

a. Termly Monitoring:

- i. The Student Bursary and Finance Officer will produce a report to monitor [Student Support Fund Allocations 2025/26](#) spend against allocations.

8. Equality Impact Assessment

(Consider whether the policy or procedures may disproportionately impact any group.)

Have you sought consultation on this policy? Details:	Strategic Lead for Safeguarding and Wellbeing Head of Future Skills and Careers Director of Inclusive Learning Head of Student Services Student Bursary and Finance Officer Student Support Officers Student Focus Groups			
Could a particular group be affected (negatively or positively)?	Impact Y/N	Description of Impact	Evidence	Mitigation/ Justification
Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010				
Age	Y	Funding regulations are in place which identify specific age groups to which the funding is applied.		Funding guidance.
Disability	Y	Learners may be required to additional support funds to enable them to access Learning Support. EHCP Learners are able to access funds to help with the cost of taxi transport.		Positive impact
Gender Reassignment	N			
Marriage and Civil Partnership	N			
Pregnancy and maternity	N			
Race	N			
Religion or belief	N			
Sex	N			
Sexual Orientation	N			

Additional characteristics to consider				
Young Persons in Care & Care Leavers	Y	Young people are able to apply for Vulnerable Bursary which offers financial support for young people in care experience		Positive impact
Young Carers & Care Givers	Y	Young people are able to apply for Vulnerable Bursary which offers financial support for young people in care experience		Positive impact
Young Parents	Y	Young people are able to apply for care to learn to support the cost of childcare provision whilst they attend College		Positive impact
Youth Offenders	N			
Those Receiving Free School Meals	Y	Eligible young people can apply for FCM and are exempt from travel contributions.		Positive impact
If there is no impact, please explain:				

POWER OF ATTORNEY DECLARATION

For Office use Only:-

Date Received -

Student Enr No -

Student Name -

Evidence sighted –

Student Details:-

Student Name _____ D.O.B. _____

Age _____ Address _____

Postcode _____ Contact Telephone Number _____

(The following to be completed by the student's parent/carer)

I _____ confirm I have Power of Attorney for the above named and therefore any bursary would need to be paid into the following account:-

Name on Account _____ Sort Code _____

Account Number _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Please attach evidence to this form. Evidence attached yes/no.

9. Appendix 2

Payment Decision Appeal

All sections must be completed or your application will be declined. If you would like support in completing your appeal application please contact a member of Student Services at your College Campus.

Name of Student		Student Number	
Campus		Course Title	

I would like to appeal against the decision of _____.
The reasons for my appeal are outlined below:

(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary and attach any supporting documentation)

Student Signature _____ Date _____

For office use only

16 - 18 Bursary ☐ 19+ Learner Support Fund ☐ Advanced Learner Support Fund ☐
HE ☐ RBF ☐ Vulnerable Bursary ☐
Report % _____ Overall % _____ Recent % _____ Colour _____ Amount £ _____

Date Appeal Received _____ Processed By _____

Appeal Panel Members

Outcome of Appeal Upheld ☐ Declined ☐

Outcome Notes

Date Appeal Outcome Letter Sent _____ Date Payment Authorised on system

Member of Staffs Name responsible for letter & payment

Financial Support Appeals Procedure

- Any student whose financial payment has been withdrawn, either temporarily or permanently has the right to appeal against that decision.
- All students will receive a withheld payment notification email on the 7th of each month if there financial payment is being effected by failing to adhere to the terms and conditions outlined in the Financial Support Guidance document.
- An appeal application overleaf must be fully completed and submitted within 5 working days of receiving the withheld payment email to Student Services at their campus of study.
- All sections on your appeal application must be fully completed or your appeal will automatically be declined.
- Any student wishing to access support or advice to complete their appeal application can contact Student Services at their campus of study.
- The outcome of the appeal will be sent to students via their student email account within 2 working days of the panel's decision been reached.
- If a student's appeal is successful, their payment will be added to the next payment run date.
- Student appeals that are unsuccessful/declined will receive a Declined Outcome Email within 2 working days of the day of the appeal panel hearing, which will detail the reason for the decision.