

## 10. OBTAINING FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR FURTHER EDUCATION

### What funding is available for further education students?

There are several types of funding available if you wish to continue into further education after you have finished your compulsory schooling. However, you should note that these schemes may not be offered in all parts of the United Kingdom and the administration and eligibility criteria can vary. Contact your LA (England and Wales), ELB (Northern Ireland) or SAAS (Scotland) for more information (details below).

- **Tuition fees/course fees (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)** - most students aged 16 to 19 studying at school sixth forms or further education colleges will not have to pay tuition fees or course fees. However, you may be required to pay a registration/enrolment fee and examination fee.
- **Fee Waiver Policy (Scotland)** - under this policy most full-time students studying below HNC/D level at FE colleges in Scotland will receive free tuition if they meet the residence criteria. If you intend to study part-time you may have your fees paid for you. However, this will depend on your family income or whether you are in receipt of certain benefits. Applications for fee waivers are made through your college.
- **Discretionary Learner Support Funds** - these are available for students studying at further education colleges who are in severe financial need. The funds are administered by colleges and are given usually as one-off grants when you are experiencing severe financial hardship. Evidence of your income will be required when you apply and some colleges will offer funds only to individuals on income-related benefits or with low incomes. The funds can be used for childcare, travel costs, course and exam fees, books, equipment and costs of field trips. There is no automatic entitlement to help from this fund: each applicant is judged individually and funds are not guaranteed.
- **The Education Maintenance Allowance** - through this scheme a weekly payment of £30 and periodic bonuses are paid to young people aged 16 – 18 from low income households to encourage them to stay on at school or college. This scheme has now closed in England but is still available in other parts of the UK.
- **Bursary Scheme (England)** - the coalition government has announced its intention to introduce a new £180 million bursary scheme, which will be targeted at full-time students who are aged 16 - 19 and facing financial hardship. The bursary scheme will be administered by schools, colleges or training providers. Eligibility criteria and bursary amounts will be determined by learning providers, and may be linked to behaviour and attendance, in addition to family income.
- **Bursary (Scotland)** - means-tested discretionary bursaries are available in Scotland to help with the living costs of students from low income families. The amount of bursary depends on your family income and you have to meet certain rules to be eligible. Awards are discretionary. Speak to your college *Bursary Officer* to find out whether you are eligible.
- **Assembly Learning Grant FE (Wales)** - you can apply for this grant if you live in Wales and are on a low income. You must be following a post compulsory education course of least 275

hours a year that leads to a nationally recognised qualification. Applications are made through Student Finance Wales (details below).

- **Further Education Awards (Northern Ireland)** - in Northern Ireland students studying on programmes of study that are not eligible for mandatory funding can apply for Further Education Awards. Funds are available for tuition fees and maintenance, with the maximum amount awarded to students with a household income below £21,330.
- **Residential Allowances (England)** - in England you can apply for help with your residential costs if you decide to study on a specialist course that is not available at a college close to your home. There are two schemes available: the Residential Bursary Scheme and the Residential Support Scheme. Visit <http://moneytolearn.direct.gov.uk/residentialbursary> for more information (these schemes are currently under review and may change or cease).
- **Transport Costs** - help with transport costs is available for students aged 16 – 19. Contact your LA (England and Wales), ELB (Northern Ireland) or SAAS (Scotland) for more information.
- **Help for students with disabilities and special needs** - if you have a disability some bus companies offer free travel and some LAs arrange free transport to school and college. Other funds may also be available so contact your college disability officer or LA for more information.
- **Individual Learning Accounts (Scotland)** - if you live in Scotland and are aged 16 or over earning less than £22,000 a year, you may qualify for an Individual Learning Account (ILA) of up to £200 a year. Visit [www.ilascotland.org.uk](http://www.ilascotland.org.uk) for more information and an application form.
- **Level 2 Entitlement** - if you intend to study on a course at Level 2 or equivalent you may be able to receive free tuition. This is available for people over the age of 19 who do not already have Level 2 qualifications or above. There is no upper age limit for this scheme and no restriction on length of course or mode of study. However, not all courses and qualifications at this level are included in the scheme, so you should contact the college in which you are interested for more information. Also, you may be required to pay registration and examination fees, so find out about these additional costs before you enrol. You will not qualify for this scheme if you have any of the following qualifications:
  - 5 GCSEs grade A – C;
  - 5 O levels;
  - 2 AS levels/1 A level;
  - 5 CSEs grade 1;
  - NVQ level 2;
  - EDEXCEL or BTEC First Diploma;
  - OCR/RSA Diploma;
  - GNVQ Intermediate;
  - City & Guilds Part 2 qualification.

If you are aged 25 or under you may be able to receive free tuition on courses at Level 3 through this scheme (if you do not already hold qualifications at this level or above).

- **FE Childcare Support Fund** - this is available for students with dependent children studying within the further education sector. Through this fund places in the college nursery are offered at a subsidised rate or financial help is offered for other registered or approved childcare. In general, funds will be allocated to those in most need, usually from low income households who are facing financial hardship. People who have little or no formal qualifications may also take priority when funds are allocated. You should look into the availability of childcare funds before enrolling as this fund is limited.

### How much money can I expect to receive?

Funding levels for the academic year 2011/12 are provided in the table below.

| TYPE OF SCHEME                          | AMOUNT OF FUNDING  |
|---|--|
| Discretionary Support Funds             | Discretionary – amounts vary depending on individual circumstances   |
| The Education Maintenance Allowance     | Up to £30 per week during term<br>£100 periodic bonus payments   |
| Bursary Scheme                          | Discretionary – amounts vary depending on individual circumstances, but can be up to £1,200 for those most in need |
| Bursary (Scotland)                      | Up to £89.07 a week  |
| Assembly Learning Grant                 | Up to £1,500 a year  |
| Further Education Awards                | Up to £930 for tuition fees<br>Up to £2,092 for maintenance  |
| Specialist residential colleges         | Up to £4,079 (London)<br>Up to £3,458 (elsewhere)  |
| Transport costs                         | Various – depends on income and travel costs   |
| Disabilities and special needs          | Various – usually includes free travel   |
| Individual Learning Accounts (Scotland) | Up to £200 per year  |
| Level 2 Entitlement (England)           | Free tuition   |
| FE Childcare Support Fund               | Various – depends on needs and available funds   |

### How do I apply for funding?

Teachers at your school or college can request information and application forms for all schemes administered by your LA, so check first whether this information is available from your school/college. Alternatively, you can contact the *Student Support* section of your LA for more information and application forms (some forms will be available online). Most LAs accept applications from the April before the start of the academic year. Transport passes should be applied for during the summer vacation prior to taking up the course.

If you want to apply for a bursary or other funds that may be available through your school or college, contact the *Student Support Officer* or the member of staff that deals with financial support. When you apply you will need to complete the relevant application form and receive verification from your school/college that you are enrolled on a course and take up the place offered. Guidance notes are provided with the forms. For most schemes you will need to demonstrate a suitable level

of academic performance and make sure that you attend your course regularly. Some schemes pay extra money if you have full attendance.

### **Where can I find more information?**

As schemes vary between LAs you are advised to contact your LA, school or college for specific information about the funds available in your area.

More information about all aspects of funding for further education in England can be obtained from <http://moneytolearn.direct.gov.uk>. Visit <https://nextstep.direct.gov.uk> for useful information about all aspects of jobs, careers and learning, including information about sources of funding that may be available to you. If you are aged 16-19 you can obtain information and advice from [www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople).

More information about funding opportunities in Wales can be obtained from Learning and Careers Advice on **0800 100 900** or you can visit [www.yourfuturechoiceaction.org.uk](http://www.yourfuturechoiceaction.org.uk) for further information and advice. Details of the ALG FE and EMA can be obtained from [www.studentfinancewales.co.uk](http://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk).

More information about funding for further education in Scotland can be obtained from [www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/education](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/education) (email: [studentsupport@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:studentsupport@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)). The Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) website also contains information about funding for further education courses: [www.saas.gov.uk](http://www.saas.gov.uk).

More information about funding in Northern Ireland can be obtained from [www.education-support.org.uk](http://www.education-support.org.uk). This is the web portal for the five Education and Library Boards in Northern Ireland. You can obtain contact details for your ELB from this site.