

## **APPLICATION FOR 19+ LEARNER SUPPORT FUND AND LEARNER LOAN BURSARY- 2020/21**

### **GUIDANCE INFORMATION**

#### **What is the Learner Support Fund / Advanced Learner Loan Bursary?**

The Learner Support Fund is intended to help those students enrolled on a further education course at South Tyneside College; to help them access and remain in education – particularly those students who need financial help to meet extra costs that cannot be met from other sources of support. The fund can help to alleviate unexpected financial hardship. Students who may be considering leaving College because of financial problems are particularly encouraged to apply. You can apply at any point throughout the academic year. Any help that you receive from the fund is usually non-repayable.

#### **Who can apply?**

In order to be eligible for a payment, you must be classed as a home student for fee purposes; and be enrolled on an SFA (Skills Funding Agency) course of study that lasts for a minimum duration of 10 weeks in total.

The Learner Support Fund cannot be used to support learners studying provision from Adult and Community Learning (ACL), UFi (University for Industry), work-based learning (WBL), waged apprenticeships, distance learning or provision with learning aims that are identified as wholly funded from other sources.

A home student is defined as a person who meets certain residency conditions. Usually this means you must have an unrestricted right to enter and remain in the UK, and you have been ordinarily resident in the UK for three years prior to the start of the course. None of this time must have been wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving full-time education. Asylum seekers aged 19 and over are eligible to apply however they will not be eligible for any cash awards and provision will be given in the form of equipment and / or course related books.

#### **If you need further information on the residency rules please speak to one of the advisory members of staff.**

Overseas students cannot apply to the Learner Support Fund.

The Learner Support Fund does aim to recognise broad priority groups, in particular learners who are economically or socially disadvantaged, disabled, medically ill and / or have learning difficulties, those who have been in care or are young parents, and / or lone parents. If you are not in one of the priority groups you can still apply but you must provide as much evidence as possible to show why you have a particular need.

You may apply more than once during an academic year for help but usually only if your circumstances have changed. You will be asked to provide documentary evidence for the change in circumstances.

#### **How to apply**

To make an application to the Learner Support Fund you will need to complete the 19+ Financial Assistance Application Form 2020-2021 and return it in person to:

Applications for Financial Assistance, South Tyneside College, St George's Avenue, South Shields, NE34 6ET

Tel: 0191 427 3500

## **Learner Support Fund Remission of fees**

Hardship funds cannot be used to subsidise tuition fees for students enrolling on a new course of study for the academic year 20/21. A small number of students studying on entry level or level one courses that are not in receipt of a means tested benefit or eligible for fee remission via any other means maybe eligible for support from the Learner Support Fund that can be used towards fees. These awards are subject to approval by the college's Learner Support Fund co-ordinator.

## **How will your Application be assessed?**

The Learner Support Fund provides discretionary assistance for students to help them access and remain in education.

## **There is no automatic entitlement, applications are means tested**

The threshold limit is £30,000. If your household income is over this amount you will not qualify for an award.

Any equipment provided remains the property of South Tyneside College and should be returned to the College on completion / withdrawal from your course. If you do not return the equipment an invoice will be sent to your home address. Failure to pay the invoice will lead to your details being passed on to a debt collection agency and may affect your future credit rating.

Incomplete applications cannot be processed and will be returned to the applicant. Applicants will receive written correspondence confirming the outcome of their application.

Students' attendance is monitored in relation to the Learner Support Fund. If your attendance levels fall below 90%, this will result in no award being made.

## **Childcare Funding**

In order to be eligible for help towards childcare costs students must meet all of the Learner Support Fund eligibility criteria. Each household will be limited to a maximum childcare support of £160 per child per week for a maximum of 2 children. The student will be liable for any costs incurred over and above the stated limits. The childcare provider user must be OFSTED registered. The college will only pay for childcare used on days the learner is timetabled to attend classes. The college will not pay for the first 15 hours of any childcare for those learners that have children aged over two years old who are eligible for an Early Years Education place. In order to reduce the costs you might incur it is advisable to use the 15 hours on your timetable days.

In order to find out if you are eligible for an Early Years Education Place or to apply please contact the Families Information Service on 0800 783 4645 or email [fis@southtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:fis@southtyneside.gov.uk) (South Tyneside Residents) or 0345 200 109 (North Tyneside Residents).

## **Appeal / Complaints**

If you are not happy with the decision of your Learner Support Fund application you may appeal in writing. If you wish to appeal against any of the above criteria or feel that you have exceptional circumstances that should be considered then please detail this in an appeal letter and send it to the following address.

Applications for Financial Assistance, South Tyneside College, St George's Avenue, South Shields, NE34 6ET

Tel: 0191 427 3500

Any appeal must be made within three weeks of the date on your awarding letter. The decision of the Appeals Panel will be final.

This document along with the Learner Support Fund application form can be provided in large print or Braille, it is also available on the College Intranet to view and download at your discretion.