

# Learner Support Fund Policy

## 19+ Programme of Study Award and Advanced Learner Loans 2020/2021

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## SCOPE AND PURPOSE

To detail how the College will offer financial support to learners across the College through the Learner Support Fund mechanism, considering Covid 19 impact measures.

Financial support will be offered to:

- 19+ learners studying a ESFA funded programme of study including those who are funded through an Advanced Learner Loan with a household income of £20,000

The LSF helps to provide financial support towards the cost of studying and more specifically will offer support for:

- Tuition fees
- Accreditation/Exam fees
- Childcare
- Travel
- Personal Hardship (clothing, personal care etc.)
- Essential equipment (including Laptops, iPads and data)

## POLICY

The LSF funds are limited and not guaranteed, these will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis and will close when the full allocation has been spent. The fund will be reviewed on a monthly basis. The college reserve the right to adjust the criteria in year according to funds available in relation to funding guidance.

### **Tuition fee support**

Learners can apply for tuition fee support if not eligible for ESFA tuition fee remission. As per Appendix 1.

### **Examination/Accreditation fee support**

Learners who have to pay an Examination/Accreditation fee can apply for assistance with this from the funds as per Appendix 1.

### **Childcare support**

Learners who incur childcare costs with an Ofsted regulated childcare provider whilst studying can apply for assistance from this fund. The level of childcare funding available to a learner will be determined by other sources of childcare support available through government led initiatives, such as the 15-30 hours of free childcare for all 2- and 3-year olds.

The maximum childcare funding available to learners will be as follows:

For children age up to 2 years old:

- The learner is expected to pay 5% of the nursery place directly to the provider.
- The college will pay a maximum of £150.00 per week.

For children aged 2 years and under 11 years:

- The college will support any additional childcare hours above the NEG hours voucher up to a maximum of £150.00 per week, per child.
- The learner is expected to pay 5% of the nursery place directly to the provider.

Where a learner has children both under and over 2 years of age, the maximum that the college will pay is £300 per week.

Any childcare costs incurred by a learner before they have official written confirmation from the college that childcare funding has been agreed and they have returned their signed contract will remain the learner's liability to pay the nursery provider.

The signed contract will need to be fully completed with all relevant information agreed for utilising the NEG vouchers against the child care whilst studying at The Manchester College.

The Attendance is monitored and acted on in relation to the contract. If a student leaves their course they may incur a notice period cost from the childcare provider. The college will give and pay a notice period according to the terms and conditions of the childcare provider.

**Travel Award** - as per Appendix 1.

\*Learners from low income households and studying on a substantial programme of 10 hrs or more per week can apply for support with the cost of travel. The travel award will be provided to learners on the basis of eligibility. Payments and support may stop if attendance falls below college expectations.

Due to Covid 19 the college is operating a phased return starting from 3 to 6 hours per week in term one and increasing based on reviews, following National and Local guidelines.

For the first few weeks of the September term, students will receive a System One scratch card for the day/s in college. Based on behaviour and attendance students will thereafter receive: -

- A cash payment equivalent to a one-day pass at £5.70 for term one
- A cash payment equivalent to a two-day pass at £11.40 for term two (subject to timetable in college and current covid restrictions)
- Students will receive a 3-month System One travel pass in term 3 (subject to timetable in college and current covid restrictions)

All payments will be operated using the BACS payment system by the Bursary Team. Attendance will be monitored and the College reserves the right to stop payments. Although this is an example, all awards will be based on individual curriculum timetables and requirements.

Students who lose or misplace the SPA bus pass will incur a fee of £10 to obtain a replacement from the bus company. Refunds are not available if a bus pass is later found. Whilst the bus pass is being replaced, there will be no replacement funds available. Any Student found misusing their bus pass will be subject to the Student disciplinary procedures. Any learner in extreme hardship will go through an eligibility assessment for additional financial support.

### **19 – 24 Unwaged Learners**

In some circumstances, for a level 1 or 2 programme of study, a learner aged 19 – 24, unwaged, may be eligible for support should a signed declaration from parents/guardian be in place, confirming that they do not financially support the learner for educational purposes (eligibility criteria apply).

### **College Hardship Funds**

We have increased the Hardship provision to be held centrally to support Students who experience sudden, unavoidable and extreme hardship e.g. homelessness. Furthermore, in reaction to the estimated numbers of job losses due to Covid 19. 243,000 residents in Manchester work in 'Shutdown sectors' that are under threat - including non-food and non-pharmaceutical retail, travel, childcare, arts and domestic services.

### **Advanced Learner Loans – in Learning Support**

Learners who have an Advanced Learner Loan and are eligible for financial support through the Programme of study award can receive additional support to access learning e.g. 1-1 support with a SEN learning difficulty or disability.

### **Equipment essential for completion and progression (Laptops, iPads and data)**

Due to the increase number of students working remotely the college will provide equipment. This will include Laptops, iPads and data for internet connection. What equipment is needed will be determined by the curriculum department and will only be offered to students who do not have any access to equipment at home.

Students will be asked if they have access to IT at home during the enrolment process. Any equipment award will be prioritised to student who have identified as having no viable access to equipment. Student will be expected to sign the college acceptable use of IT policy and college agreement form. Students will not be issued with any equipment until this has been returned. Any student found to be using equipment inappropriately, the College reserves the right to stop any services and request the return of any equipment. If students are asked to leave or leave their course due to other reasons, we will expect the equipment returned to the college.

### **PROCESS**

Any learners wishing to apply for financial support will need to complete an application form and produce proof of household income.<sup>1</sup>

Proof of household income can be evidenced through:

- Tax Credit Letter (Working or Child))
- Benefit Letters
- Wage slips for the last 3 months or P60
- Self-assessment tax calculation or certified accounts
- NASS Support/Aspen Card
- Bank account details

Written confirmation of the allocation will be sent within 15 working days.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

To be eligible for an allocation a learner must be:

- Enrolled to a The Manchester College course
- Eligible for ESFA funding or in receipt of an Advanced Learner Loan
- Have a good attendance Pattern in line with the college expectations
- Meet the minimum criteria relating to household income

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<sup>1</sup> Administration Fee: The College will retain a maximum of a 5% administration fee.

**Eligibility criteria apply subject to status and all funding correct at time of publication.**

## **APPEALS**

Should a student wish to appeal eligibility they should put this in writing, with any additional evidence they wish to be considered to Customer Service staff on their site of study, who will record the appeal and investigate within 5 working days.

## **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

Learners can expect an inclusive and supportive learning environment whatever their background.

## **LOCATION AND ACCESS TO THIS POLICY**

Learner My Day portal  
College Website  
Careers & Welfare Service  
Customer Services

## Appendix 1 – 19+ and Advanced Learner Loans 2018-2019)

	<b>19 + Fully Funded</b> Income below £20,000	<b>19 + Co - Funded</b> Income below £20,000	<b>Advanced Learner Loans</b> Income below £20,000
<b>Tuition fee</b>		Eligible for full tuition fee support	
<b>Accreditation/ Examination fees</b>		Eligible for full contribution for essential accreditation/exam fees linked to the learner's programme of study except for Professional Body registration.	Full contribution for essential accreditation/exam fees which are not included within the learning loan amount and are linked to the learner's programme of study except for Professional Body registration.
<b>Travel</b>	Fund bus travel costs for learners studying 10 hrs or more per week	Fund bus travel costs for learners studying 10 hrs or more per week up	Fund bus travel costs for learners studying 10 hours or more per week
<b>Extreme Hardship i.e. homeless</b>	To be determined on an individual case by case basis.	To be determined on an individual case by case basis	To be determined on an individual case by case basis. Via Careers, Employability and Welfare and Student Experience
<b>Childcare Support</b>	Learners who incur childcare costs with an Ofsted regulated childcare provider whilst studying can apply for assistance with this from this fund. Maximum weekly support payments apply as stated in policy.	Learners who incur childcare costs with an Ofsted regulated childcare provider whilst studying can apply for assistance with this from this fund. Maximum weekly support payments apply as stated in policy.	Learners who incur childcare costs with an Ofsted regulated childcare provider whilst studying can apply for assistance with this from this fund. Maximum weekly support payments apply as stated in policy.
<b>Learning Support costs</b>			For learners in receipt of a 19+ Advanced Learner Loan only.  Costs of meeting any additional learning needs, as assessed by the Specialist Support team, will be fully funded.