



Discretionary Learning Support Fund

Discretionary Learner Support is intended to support learners who are in exceptional financial hardship that prevents them from participating in learning. Before making an award the learner's specific financial hardship need must be identified within the following areas: (DLSF guidance: Education Skills Funding Agency):

- ✓ 19 or over and in financial hardship
- ✓ 20 or over with childcare issues

Learners must meet the personal eligibility rules in the Education Skills Funding Agency's guidance to access this funding. Funding is limited and at the discretion of the On Course South West. No further awards can be made once it has been used. OCSW reserves the right to amend or change this offer to best meet the needs of the learners applying to this fund.

Financial hardship must be established for all learners as part of the application process for Discretionary Learner Support Funds. There will have an interview and evidence will be required to demonstrate how the criteria is met.

What can it fund?

Course, registration and exam fees.

The Discretionary Learner Support Fund can pay a contribution towards the course, registration, exam fees, accreditation fees, professional membership fees and any fees or charges due to external bodies. This contribution will be calculated as part of the funding.

Childcare

This is for learners aged 20 and over where childcare is a barrier to learning and who are not already accessing "Care to Learn" funding. The Discretionary Learner Support Fund may help towards childcare costs for the following:



LEARNER INFORMATION

- ✓ The days when you are timetabled to attend the course or examination
- ✓ Attending placements which are compulsory to the successful completion of the course

Childcare will **not be paid for any holiday periods** when the course is not scheduled. The award will be calculated using the published number of weeks of the course. Free childcare that must be used first to cover the time in the classroom. There may be help to fund any additional childcare expenses incurred.

The childcare provider must be Ofsted registered. The maximum award is £500.



LEARNER INFORMATION

Travel

The Discretionary Learner Support Fund may pay a contribution towards the cost of travel; this must be discussed and agreed when making the initial application for support. You cannot claim for travel if they live within 1 mile of the venue in which the course is being delivered. Evidence will be required such as bus/train tickets.

Maximum travel costs reimbursed £500.

Essential Course Equipment

One or two books might be 'core texts' which are essential for the completion of the course of study.

All equipment remains the property of the provider and must be returned on completion of your course.

How do I apply?

In order for to establish financial hardship and eligibility to apply to the fund, an application form must be completed and supported with proof of household income. The following documents will be required:

- ✓ A copy of at least 3 months' pay slips
- ✓ Proof of benefits
- ✓ A copy of your most recent bank statement

Please note, without acceptable evidence your application will not be processed.

Eligibility to this fund does not entitle you to an award and any award made is subject to satisfactory attendance, behaviour and achievement. Attendance can be no less than 85% and with 100% attendance at assessment/exams sessions. If you do not complete your learning aim you must pay back any funds awarded to you.

It is your responsibility to tell the Department for Work and Pensions about any learner support they are receiving from us, as learner support payments may affect their eligibility to state benefits.

Who can't apply?

Learners can't claim if they're getting student finance for higher education or if they are on a Community Learning course. If they are under 20 and require support with childcare, details can be found on Care to Learn on the gov.uk website.