

What Does Learner Support Do?

What is Learner Support?

Learner Support is a package of funds, made available through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), to help offset barriers to participation in learning.

The main barriers are cost of childcare and financial hardship. Some funds are based on national entitlement and some funds are based on local learning provider discretion.



Barriers to Learning

There are three major barriers to participation in learning:

- > General attitude
- > Issues with the cost of childcare
- > Other financial issues



Attitudinal issues are addressed through effective information, advice and guidance for young people and adults. Learner Support helps address the financial barriers.

Overcoming Barriers

The purpose of Learner Support is to enable more potential learners to participate and to enable those already in learning to apply themselves better, where finance would otherwise be a problem. In a world of demand-led funding, it helps individual learners to aspire, demand and take up learning.

Learner Support money is used to meet four types of cost...



- > Learning-related (e.g. course materials or bus fares to college)
- > Living / maintenance (e.g. housing, utilities, food, childcare) — because being in learning means not earning or earning less
- > Course fees
- > Additional provision (e.g. extra transport services, hearing impedance loops, a reader to enable sight - impaired learners to participate, dyslexia diagnosis testing, enhanced teacher-student ratios to help learners who are struggling etc.)

What is available? The 9 Strands of Learner Support

Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility for entitlement-based and discretionary funds is based upon a number of criteria which include:

- Residency status
 - Whether or not the learner has children
 - Individual / household income
 - The type of learning enrolled on.
- This may be LSC funded courses such as GCSEs, A levels, NVQs or apprenticeships

<p>1. EMA</p>  <p>Education Maintenance Allowance is a weekly allowance paid to young learners from low-income households. EMA supports them with the costs of learning once they have finished compulsory schooling. It is designed to ensure that all 16-19 year olds can choose to access high quality, relevant learning opportunities. For more information, please visit: http://ema.lsc.gov.uk</p>	<p>3. DaDA</p> <p>Dance and Drama Awards (DaDAs) are scholarships, funded by the LSC, offering reduced tuition fees and income-assessed support for living and learning costs for talented performers and stage managers. For more information, please visit: http://danceanddrama.lsc.gov.uk</p>	<p>4. ALG</p>  <p>Adult Learning Grant is intended to help adults studying full-time (more than 12 hours / week) with the costs of learning. This grant is payable (subject to financial assessment) to learners aged 19+ studying for their first full Level 2 / Level 3 qualification. For more information, please visit: http://alg.lsc.gov.uk</p>	<p>5. Professional and Career Development Loans</p> <p>Professional and Career Development Loans are commercial bank loans, with competitive interest rates, which can be used to fund a variety of work-related courses, to help people gain the experience, training and qualifications they need to improve their job skills or launch a new career. The LSC pays the interest on this loan while the learner is in learning. Repaying the loan is the responsibility of the learner, so they should borrow only as much as they need. For more information, please visit: http://pcdl.lsc.gov.uk</p>	<p>6. Adult Childcare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > General FE FE Colleges may be able to help parents aged 20 and over with childcare costs. > Sixth Form College Childcare Scheme This provides childcare funding for young parents aged 20 or over who study in a school sixth form or sixth form college. For more information, please visit: http://lsc.lsc.gov.uk/sixthformchildcarescheme > Free Childcare for Training and Learning for Work FCTLW supports adults (aged 20 years and over) with their childcare and travel costs whilst they are in learning/training leading to work. The scheme is aimed at families where one parent is in work (16 hours or more per week) but on a low income and the other is out of work but looking to enter learning. For more information, visit: http://lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn/childcarentraininglearning 	<p>7. dLS Hardship</p> <p>These funds can help learners with support for costs associated with learning including support with course trips, books and equipment. For more information, please visit: http://lsf.lsc.gov.uk</p> <p>8. Transport Partnership Funding</p> <p>Transport funds are given directly to Local Authorities to support a collaborative approach to local transport issues. For more information, please visit: http://16-19transport.lsc.gov.uk</p>	<p>9. Residential Accommodation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Residential Support Scheme Helps with accommodation costs for courses that are not available within 'reasonable daily travelling distance' of learner's home. For more information, please visit: http://studyingaway.lsc.gov.uk > Residential Bursary Helps with accommodation costs for learners who are studying land-based provision or art and design at one of the 51 specialist colleges. Visit: http://moneytolearn.direct.gov.uk/residentialbursary
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How These Funds Work

How much a learner may get depends on their individual circumstances but the support might involve:

- A weekly payment made direct to the learner
 - Discretionary help awarded from a local college/learning provider level in times of hardship
 - Help with transport and accommodation
 - Help with childcare costs
 - An interest-free loan which a learner repays once a course of training/learning has finished
- To find out more the learner should contact their local Connexions, nextstep or student support adviser.



The Benefits of Learner Support

Participation, Retention and Achievement

- Out of a survey of 2000 recipients of EMA 6% said they would not have continued in learning had it not been for EMA.
- Retention rates for learners receiving EMA were 89.4% in 2004/05 compared to 87.1% for those not receiving it.
- 15% of adult learners said they would have dropped out had it not been for ALG.
- 11% of adult learners receiving ALG would not have gone on a course without it.

Life Chances for Disadvantaged and Disinclined Learners

- EMA has a greater impact on disadvantaged groups including minority ethnic groups and those with backgrounds of high deprivation.
- Over 80% of Learning Providers feel the Hardship strand of Learner Support is effective at widening participation.

Employability

- The majority of C2L recipients who went on to work said learning had helped them to find a job.
- 59% of those who were in work also reported that the job they had was better than any job they had done before.

Personal Wellbeing

- 88% of ALG recipients said it gave them the confidence to do more studying.

Improving Access to Learning

- 75% of C2L recipients said they would not have gone on a course without financial support.
- 91% of recipients of ALG said that their experiences of ALG had influenced their intention to do future learning.

Research and Evaluation documents for all of the programme strands referenced above are available to download from:

www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn



Further Information

On Learner Support:

www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/moneytolearn

On Targets:

www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/data/statistics/learner

