



ADULT EDUCATION WOLVERHAMPTON

Student Financial Support Policy and Procedure

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1.1	October 2019	
2.1	October 2020	Amended to reflect the WMCA and ESFA Funding Rules for academic year 2020-21
3.1	August 2022	Reviewed
4.0	November 2023	Reviewed, Childcare Terms of Use Form - Appendix1
5.0	November 2024	Amended to reflect the WMCA and ESFA Funding Rules for academic year 2024-25
6.0	August 2025	Amended to reflect the WMCA and ESFA/DfE Funding Rules for academic year 2025-26 ESFA (Education Support Funding Agency) replaced by DfE (Department for Education) following a re-brand

STUDENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Introduction

The Department for Education (DfE) and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) publish guidance clarifying the criteria for financial support to help students facing financial hardship through the 16-19 Bursary, Discretionary Learner Support Fund and the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary. The aim of funding is to support those most in need with the associated costs of attending, to remove barriers to learning and support the completion of a course at Adult Education Wolverhampton (AEW).

Support is available to students who are fully funded, co-funded or have applied for the Advanced Learner Loan where they meet the criteria.

2. Intent

Financial support may only be provided where a vulnerable or disadvantaged student has demonstrated a financial barrier which impacts on their learning.

Students are assessed as independent students and household income is assessed, their own income, together with that of their spouse/partner if applicable. However, if a student has no income, household income will be based on the income of the person(s) on whom the student is dependent.

3. 16-19 Bursary

General Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ be at least 16 and under 19 on 31 August 2024 ▪ have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) and be aged 18 – 24 on 31 August 2025 ▪ have ‘home’ student status or have been granted full ‘refugee’ or ‘asylum seeker’ status (British Citizens normally have ‘home student’ status) ▪ have been ‘ordinarily resident in the UK, EU or EEA continuously for the last 3 years before the start of your course, with ‘settled status’ which means having indefinite leave to enter or remain (ILE/ILR)
There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursary:	
Vulnerable Group Bursary	<p>One of the following will need to apply to students who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ in or recently left local authority care ▪ in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit in their own name ▪ in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in the student’s own name and either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC) <p>Students must have actual financial need Award is based on documented costs</p>
Discretionary Bursary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ based on income threshold £25,750 ▪ annual income checks will take place and students will self-declare <p>Funds allocated will be based on individual need (there should be no fixed/blanket rates)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ daily bus pass. Students will need to live more than 2 miles from their place of study ▪ the cost of lunch up the value of £4.00 ▪ the cost of specialist clothing if a student is on a work placement ▪ payments towards equipment relating to a programme of study <p>Funds cannot be used for general living expenses or as incentives. There may be emergency</p>

Care to Learn Scheme

The scheme helps with childcare costs for students who are under 20 years old. Students must be the main carer for the child, live in England, be a British citizen or have a legal right to live and study in England. Students can get up to £180 per child per week. Care to Learn can help with the cost of:

- childcare, including deposit and registration fees
- a childcare taster session for up to 5 days
- keeping the childcare place over the summer holidays
- taking the child to their childcare provider

Applications are made online [Apply for Care to Learn](#)

food support in cases of short-term hardship if funding is available.

4. Discretionary Learner Support Fund (DLSF)

Applications will be judged in line with DfE or WMCA funding guidance which will depend upon where they live.

General Eligibility

- aged 19 or over on 31st August 2024
- have 'home' student status or have been granted full 'refugee' or 'asylum seeker' status (British citizens normally have 'home student' status)
- have been 'ordinarily resident in the UK, EU or EEA continuously for the last 3 years before the start of your course, with 'settled status' which means having indefinite leave to enter or remain (ILE/ILR)
- Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme and Ukraine Family Scheme
- studying ESFA and WMCA funded 'priority' courses that are eligible to apply for support
- in receipt of a qualifying means-tested benefit, defined low income or fulfil the relevant funding organisation's definition of 'unemployed'

Support for course fees and/or exam costs

WMCA

Working and earning less than £34,194 (gross) per year
Unemployed, looking and available for work
Unemployed and not looking for work because:

- looking after family/home
- illness or disability
- retired

No fees are payable by the student.

Course fees are fully funded by the DfE or WMCA

Exam costs payable by DLSF

DfE

Unemployed, looking for work and in receipt of:

- Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
- Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal credit and unemployed and actively looking for work
- Working and earning less than less than £25,750

(gross) per year	
Income support	Fees may be payable by the student depending upon their financial situation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Working Tax Credit ▪ Council Tax Reduction ▪ Pension Guarantee Credit 	Fees may be payable by the student depending upon their financial situation
Low household income of £34,194 WMCA or £25,750 DfE or less assessed in exceptional circumstances	Fees may be payable by the student depending upon their financial situation.
Any exam re-sit costs are payable by the student	
Travel and Parking	
<p>If students are eligible:</p> <p>They must be in attendance on site for 1 session or more per week and live 2 miles or more from the place of learning. If, however, there are exceptional circumstances, we will need to see supporting evidence.</p> <p>Please note, if an application has been made for support for childcare costs, travel support may not be approved. The funding you are applying for comes from a government fund and is public money. There is a maximum that is awarded for childcare dependent on the course you are studying and it may not meet the full cost of the childcare.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) ▪ Employment Support Allowance (ESA) ▪ Universal credit and unemployed ▪ Income Support ▪ Low wage ▪ Low household income - assessed individual and may be payable only if 100% remission is awarded for course costs 	<p>Daily West Midlands travel card / bus pass issued subject to attendance up to the value of £4.25 or</p> <p>£4.50 maximum towards car-parking per day, £2.50 per half a day upon receipt of proof of payment. This will be paid directly into a bank account</p>
Childcare support	
<p>Students must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ be fully enrolled and use any entitlement to free childcare hours from the government before accessing DLSF ▪ provide their child's birth certificate and a copy of their timetable ▪ ensure costs are approved before using the childcare provider. Students will be liable for any costs not approved ▪ attend all planned classes. Any offer of financial support may be withdrawn if attendance falls below 95% ▪ notify the Student Services team within 5 working days if attendance stops or if there are any changes. Students will be liable for any cancellation costs <p>Refer to the Childcare Terms and Conditions 2025-26, Appendix 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AEW will only pay to childcare providers who are OFSTED registered ▪ AEW will pay up to one time the value of the learning aim being studied. You may be asked to pay a contribution if costs are in excess of this amount 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) ▪ Employment Support Allowance (ESA) ▪ Universal credit and unemployed ▪ Income Support ▪ Low wage ▪ Low household income - assessed individual and may be payable only if 100% remission is awarded for course costs 	<p>Payment will be made directly to the childcare provider subject to acceptable attendance.</p> <p>If the student is required to contribute to the childcare costs, payment should be made to AEW.</p>

Resources

Reimbursement of actual costs per session to a maximum amount will be paid upon production of an itemised bill / receipt and attendance authorised by the teacher.

Reimbursement is made directly into the student's bank account and relates mainly to creative classes detailed below. Claims should be made monthly, with evidence submitted by 7th day of the following month in which the resources were used. Refer to the payment dates in the Childcare Terms and Conditions Appendix 1

An allocation for the ingredients for Life Skills cookery classes will be at a maximum of £5.50 per student per class.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) ■ Employment Support Allowance (ESA) ■ Universal credit, unemployed and actively looking for work ■ Income Support ■ Low wage ■ Low household income - assessed individual and may be payable only if 100% remission is awarded for course costs 	Art, Flowers, Sugar craft, and Sewing & Textiles	
	Entry Level	£5.00
	Level 1	£7.50
	Level 2	£10.00

Disclosure and Barring Service

If a DBS is required for a work placement as part of a course. AEW will process and administer the DBS application appropriate for the placement and the course.

Educational visits

A maximum allocation of £500 per term, per curriculum area will be allocated for the cost of educational visits as part of a course or enrichment activity. Following an application by a Teaching Learning and Assessment Manager (TLAM) with a reason and impact expected, the money may be used to pay for transport and the cost of entry to an attraction, exhibition or activity.

Digital Device Scheme

Students can apply to loan a laptop. This is for students who do not have access to a computer or laptop to complete work and study from home. The loan will be for a limited time only and will not be permitted past the course end date. Students can also apply for a Mi-Fi device and data, if they do not have sufficient access to the internet at home to enable learning.

Access to HE students can apply to borrow a Webcam.

Applications will be approved on a first come basis, however, students studying on Level 2 and 3 courses will be given priority.

Students are required to complete a self-declaration and an agreement.

Students should take care of the device/s and will be responsible for the costs should the items not be returned by the due date, lost, stolen or damaged.

5. Advanced Learning Loan Bursary

General Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ aged 19 or over on 31st August 2024 ▪ have ‘home’ student status or have been granted full ‘refugee’ status (British Citizens normally have ‘home student’ status) ▪ have been ‘ordinarily resident in the UK, EU or EEA continuously for the last 3 years before the start of your course, with ‘settled status’ which means having indefinite leave to enter or remain (ILE/ILR) ▪ studying a level 3 or above course and has an approved Advanced Learner Loan 	
Additional Support		
<p>If a student has been assessed as needing additional learning support to complete their course, the cost will be met through the bursary fund.</p>		
Travel and Parking		
<p>They must be in attendance on site for 1 session or more per week and live 2 miles or more from the place of learning. If, however, there are exceptional circumstances, we will need to see supporting evidence. Please note, if an application has been made for support for childcare costs, travel support may not be approved. The funding you are applying for comes from a government fund and is public money. There is a maximum that is awarded for childcare dependent on the course you are studying and it may not meet the full cost of the childcare.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) ▪ Employment Support Allowance (ESA) ▪ Universal credit, unemployed and actively looking for work ▪ Income Support ▪ Low wage <p>Low household income - assessed individual and may be payable only if 100% remission is awarded for course costs</p>	<p>Daily West Midlands travel card / bus pass issued subject to attendance up to the value of £4.25 or £4.50 maximum towards car-parking per day, £2.50 per half a day upon receipt of proof of payment. This will be paid directly into a bank account</p>	
Childcare support		
<p>Students must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ be fully enrolled and use any entitlement to free childcare hours from the government before accessing DLSF ▪ provide their child’s birth certificate and a copy of their timetable ▪ ensure costs are approved before using the childcare provider. Students will be liable for any costs not approved ▪ attend all planned classes. Any offer of financial support may be withdrawn if attendance falls below 95% ▪ notify the Student Services team within 5 working days if attendance stops or of there are any changes. Students will be liable for any cancellation costs <p>Refer to the Childcare Terms and Conditions 2025-26, Appendix 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AEW will only pay childcare providers who are OFSTED registered <p>AEW will pay up to one time the value of the learning aim being studied. You may be asked to pay a contribution if costs are in excess of this amount</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) ▪ Employment Support Allowance (ESA) ▪ Universal credit and unemployed and actively looking for work ▪ Income Support ▪ Low wage ▪ Low household income - assessed individual and may be payable only if 100% remission is 	<p>Payment will be made directly to the childcare provider subject to acceptable attendance. If the student is required to make a contribution to the childcare costs, payment should be made to AEW</p>	

awarded for course costs	
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Disclosure and Barring Service

If a DBS is required for a work placement as part of the course. AEW will process and administer the DBS application appropriate for the placement and the course

6. Conditions of receiving financial support

The following defines AEW’s expectations for students:

- Adhere to the Student Charter. This is found in the Student Handbook, issued during your course induction period.
 - 100% attendance is important to achieve on your course.
 - Demonstrate commitment to studies
 - Good conduct
 - Attending pastoral reviews (for 16-19 Bursary)
- Students are expected to:
 - Be truthful in their application and tell us if their circumstances change. The service reserves the right to demand return of any financial support awarded, whether in cash or kind, in the event that a fraudulent claim is made
 - Be responsible and update the relevant bodies if any monetary awards are made to them. It is the students’ responsibility to inform the DWP/Benefits agency of any financial support awarded
 - Whilst we recognise that some students face financial pressures, the funding you are applying for comes from a government fund and is public money. It is not a right. We have a duty to ensure that the funds are awarded fairly to students most in need.

Failure to meet these conditions will result in withdrawal or reduction of the agreed award and risks withdrawal from course.

7. Applications

Students are required to make an online application and present evidence of household income and benefits letters.

Financial Support (travel, parking, childcare, resources, 16-18 Bursary and Advanced Learning Loan Bursary)

[Financial Support Application 2025-26](#)



Loan a laptop / internet access [Digital Support Application 2025-2026](#)



Care leavers should present a letter from the local authority as evidence.

For childcare support you will be required to bring in your child's birth certificate and a member of the Student Services team will take you through the procedure.

To check eligibility and make an application, contact the Student Services team in the following ways:

Email: enquiries@aes.wolverhampton.gov.uk | Phone: 01902 551658

The approval of financial support is dependent upon the availability of funds [and changing priorities](#). AEW has the right to withdraw or reduce payment at any time.

8. Applications

Students are required to make an online [Financial Support Application](#) and present evidence of household income and benefits letters.

Care leavers should present a letter from the local authority as evidence.

For childcare support you will be required to bring in your child's birth certificate, a copy of your class timetable and a member of the [Student Services team will take you through the process](#).

To check eligibility and make an application, contact the Student Services team in the following ways:

Email: enquiries@aes.wolverhampton.gov.uk | Phone: 01902 551658

The approval of financial support is dependent upon the availability of funds. AEW has the right to withdraw or reduce payment at any time.

9. Appeal

An appeals procedure is in place to ensure that all students who are unhappy about the decision made regarding their financial support are treated equally and are given the right to appeal. If you are unhappy about one of the following, please make your appeal in writing to the Head of Student Services within 10 days of receiving communication:

- The outcome of your application
- A decision to withdraw support
- The way your support has been administered.

10. Confidentiality and Data Protection

AEW will ensure that applications are handled confidentially. Your information will be held securely and in compliance with GDPR. For audit purposes, however, hard copies of all documentation for learner support will be kept for a period of six years and made available for audit purposes.

11. Equal Opportunities

No applicant will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

12. Review

This policy and any associated procedures will be reviewed on an annual basis and be amended in accordance with guidance from the DfE and WMCA.

Appendix 1

Childcare Terms and Conditions 2025-26

Adult Education Wolverhampton agrees to:

- consider all applications for support on an individual basis. An application does not guarantee support as funds are not unlimited
- follow the 2025_26 eligibility criteria for accessing support for learning
- pay for childcare if you fulfil the eligibility criteria
- pay Ofsted registered childcare providers only
- pay the childcare provider directly
- pay for childcare up to the total value of your learning (this is the cost of the learning aim) minus any financial support available from the government

Eligible students agree to:

- be fully enrolled before making a financial application
- ensure financial support for childcare available from the government is used first
- provide the financial evidence needed to apply for childcare support
- find an Ofsted registered childcare provider
- ensure costs are approved before using the childcare provider. You will be liable for any costs not approved
- attend all planned classes. Any offer of financial support may be withdrawn if attendance falls below 95%
- arrive for your class 10 minutes before the start time and not leave class early
- organise doctor and hospital appointments outside of class times and provide evidence of the appointment if this is unavoidable
- notify the Student Services team within 5 working days if you stop attending class, as you will be liable for any cancellation costs
- use the childcare provided for the purpose of attending classes at Adult Education Wolverhampton
- tell the Student Services team if there are any changes to the days of your course or the cost of childcare within 5 working days
- re-apply for childcare funding when I re-enrol on a new or additional course. If I do not re-apply, any previous application will not apply, and you will be liable for costs not approved or outstanding

Childcare providers agree to:

- provide evidence of Ofsted registration by adding your number to the childcare agreement
- only provide childcare when a student's application has been approved and you have received an official PO number
- return the childcare form for each student within 5 working days to confirm you have capacity
- submit invoices monthly following the dates listed below to ensure regular payment:

Month:	Submit invoices by:
September 2025	7 October 2025
October 2025	7 November 2025
November 2025	7 December 2025
December 2025	7 January 2026
January 2026	7 February 2026
February 2026	7 March 2026
March 2026	7 April 2026
April 2026	7 May 2026

May 2026	7 June 2026
June 2026	7 July 2026
July 2026	31 July 2026

- follow City of Wolverhampton Council procedures by submitting invoices to cwc.invoices@proactiscapture.com
- submit your final invoice for the 2025_26 academic year by 31 July 2026