

## 16-19 Bursary Fund Q&A For Young People and Parents (V2 5 September 2011)

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## **Background and policy context for the new bursary fund**

### **What is the new bursary fund?**

The 16 to 19 bursary fund is a new £180 million scheme to help young people facing financial hardship to stay in full-time education.

The scheme is made up of two parts:

- Those most in need will be **eligible for a bursary of £1,200 a year**. This includes young people in care, care leavers, young people receiving income support, and disabled young people receiving both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance
- Other students who need financial support to help them to stay in education or training may also be able to claim a bursary to help with costs of transport, food, equipment or other course-related costs.

### **How many young people will this new fund help?**

As an illustration, the new fund would be sufficient to provide a bursary of £800 a year to over 15% of 16-19 year olds in full-time education – more than covering all students who would have qualified for free school meals and who would have attracted the pupil premium while in school to 16.

### **When is this happening?**

The new scheme will start in September 2011 and the money will be distributed directly by schools, colleges and training providers during the 2011/12 academic year.

### **Who decides who will get money?**

Those who have been identified as most in need will be eligible for a bursary of £1,200. For all others, schools, colleges and training providers will decide who most need funds to stay on in education or training and how much they will get.

### **Why is the Government getting rid of EMAs?**

The EMA scheme cost £560 million a year. It was a very expensive way of supporting young people to continue in education or training and was not well targeted on those who are facing genuine financial barriers to participation. The Government believes that the high cost is no longer affordable and that it is more appropriate to give vulnerable young people support than give all

young people an incentive to stay in education. It is felt that the new fund is a better use of public money and guarantees protection for those most in need.

**How do I find out more about the new bursary?**

For more information and advice speak to the student support services or your tutor, or go to [www.direct.gov.uk/16-19bursary](http://www.direct.gov.uk/16-19bursary)

## **Eligibility**

### **Who will be eligible for a bursary?**

Those most in need, such as young people in care, care leavers, young people receiving income support and disabled young people receiving both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance will receive a bursary of at least £1,200.

Schools, colleges and training providers will also be able to award bursaries to other students in ways that best fit local needs and individual circumstances.

### **Which teenage parents are eligible for the £1,200 bursary?**

Only teenage parents who are in receipt of income support will get the £1,200 bursary. However, other teenage parents who are not in receipt of income support will still be able to apply for a bursary from their school, college or training provider.

### **If I am in one of the vulnerable groups what evidence will my school, college or training provider need to see to know I am eligible?**

If you are receiving income support you can provide a letter from the Department of Work and Pensions setting out the benefit you are entitled to.

If you are in care or a care leaver, the local authority will be able to provide a letter for the school, college, or training provider confirming this.

### **I think I will have to drop out of education - I can't afford the travel, but I am not in a vulnerable group. What can I do?**

Talk to your school, college or training provider about your travel situation and find out what kind of support they might be able to offer you.

### **Will my school/college pry into my family finances?**

If you ask your school, college or training provider for financial support, they may ask for some evidence of your family's income such as a benefit entitlement or a P60 or Tax Credit Award Notice if your parent or parents are employed, or other information if they are self-employed.

### **Will I be eligible to receive a bursary if I am studying at a Higher Education institution?**

No. The 16-19 Bursary Fund is designed to help young people with the costs

of continuing in further education only; separate student finance arrangements are available to help support young people in higher education – more details can be found at [www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance](http://www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance)

## **Practicalities and applying for the bursary**

### **How much will young people get?**

Those most in need, such as young people in care, care leavers, young people receiving income support and disabled young people receiving both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance will receive a bursary of at least £1,200.

For other young people it will be entirely down to their school, college or training provider to decide how much they get. This will depend on their individual circumstances so some young people may end up getting help with the cost of course related equipment and others may get help with travel costs.

### **How will young people receive their bursary? Will it be paid in a single lump sum?**

Schools, colleges and training providers will decide whether this will be paid as a lump sum or in installments and how often payments are made.

### **What can the money be spent on?**

The money is for the books, meals, transport or other course-related costs needed to help a young person stay in education. Schools, colleges and training providers may choose to pay this as a cash payment or provide 'in kind' support, for example, by bulk purchasing equipment that students need for particular courses.

### **When will the money be available?**

The new 16 to 19 bursary fund will start from September 2011. Schools, colleges and training providers will have the flexibility to decide when payments should be made.

### **Will young people automatically get this money, or will they have to meet conditions, like with EMA?**

Like with the EMA it is likely that schools, colleges and training providers will expect conditions based around attendance, behaviour and standard of work.

### **How do I apply for a bursary?**

You have to apply directly to your school, college or training provider for a bursary. They will probably expect you to meet certain conditions, for

example, linked to behaviour or attendance. In most cases they decide on the amount and when it is paid.

**If I get the transitional support funds can I also apply for a bursary?**

Yes. However, your school, college or training provider will be expected to take into account the fact that you are receiving regular weekly payments in determining what they should receive

**Will I need to re-apply every year?**

Your school, college or training provider will be able to tell you what their policy will be for when you will need to apply for support.

**Will everyone at school/college know that I am in a 'vulnerable group'?**

It is expected that schools, colleges and training providers will design their policies for the 16-19 Bursary Fund sensitively, in ways that do not single out young people in receipt of financial support.

**Who can I appeal to if I think I should get the money and my school/college disagrees?**

Schools, colleges and training providers should all have established complaints processes, which should be used if young people think they have been treated unfairly.

## **EMA transition**

### **What will happen to those young people who currently get EMA?**

Transitional arrangements will help those who are part-way through their studies and are currently receiving the EMA.

- The most vulnerable students currently receiving EMA (young people in care, care leavers and those on income support) will be eligible for the £1,200 bursary in place of their current EMA weekly payments.
- Students who successfully applied for EMA in 2009/10 will continue to receive payments at the level set out in their EMA guarantee for each week they are in education or training, until the end of the 2011/12 academic year.
- Students who successfully applied for the maximum weekly EMA payment of £30 in 2010/11 will be eligible for £20 for each week they are in education or training, until the end of the 2011/12 academic year.
- Students who started in Year 12 in September 2010 and who received either £20 or £10 a week EMA will no longer receive EMA but they can apply for a bursary from their school, college or training provider.