

## **FAQs from childcare workshops September 2010**

### **Travel**

#### **On a multi-campus site, can students claim travel where the college-based nursery is on a different campus to the learning site?**

Care to Learn will not pay travel costs where the childcare takes place on the same site as the learning. However, we understand some colleges operate over several sites as a campus system. If the childcare is on a separate site from the learning, the cost of additional travel for the journey between home and childcare provider may be paid.

#### **Can travel be claimed from the Childcare Provider to the Learning Provider?**

Learners can only claim for additional travel costs that a parent must pay in order to take their child between home and the Childcare Provider. This does not include the normal travel costs incurred when travelling to their chosen place of learning. Learners may be able to get help with the cost of their journey to their usual place of learning from their Learning Provider or local authority.

#### **On the registration forms, is the 'total amount' for travel the costs per week?**

Yes, the total amount is per week; if the learner has a travel cost that is annual they should calculate this and put down an average price per week. The start and end date relates to the period for which travel costs are needed; this would typically be the start and end date of the course.

#### **Why do travel costs not get paid directly to the young person?**

Travel costs are paid to the Learning Provider termly, in advance. This is so that the Learning Provider can responsibly pass the money to the learner at intervals, as they feel are appropriate, for example weekly or monthly. To make best, or safest, use of public funds, this is considered the best option.

### **Childcare payments**

#### **What are the protocols for covering sickness/days off and parent or child illness?**

In general, we would expect that learners and their children are attending their provision for all of the hours stated on their application form, but it is recognised that there will be occasions where it is not possible for either the learner and/or the child to attend; for example, illness. For this reason, there is

not a required level of attendance for this scheme, as there is for EMA and ALG. When completing attendance monitoring returns, Providers should use their discretion to assess the number of absences and the reasons for these when deciding whether or not the learner is still 'on programme' and still intends to finish their learning.

**If the summer retainer application was submitted after the commencement of the summer break, will the funds be backdated to cover the whole holiday period?**

If a young parent wishes to apply for a summer retainer to secure a childcare place over the summer period, they must complete a summer retainer application and submit this before the 1<sup>st</sup> September. Summer retainer forms can be obtained from the LSS on **0800 121 8989**. We will usually pay up to 8 weeks summer retainer where the learner has been assessed as eligible, and we are notified before the end of the summer break. If a parent applied for more than 8 weeks, the case must be referred to the YPLA for a decision.

**What are the arrangements around notice periods and fees?**

If the Childcare Provider is no longer providing a service to the parent (because they have withdrawn the child) they must notify the LSS immediately. They will be entitled to up to four weeks notice. If the parent has notified the LSS of their intention to withdraw their child, the LSS must immediately provide notice to the Childcare Provider of the date from which the childcare support will stop.

If the childcare has not yet started and the LSS identifies that the learner has withdrawn from their course, payment to the Childcare Provider will be limited to the amount of deposit required as stated on the Childcare Provider Registration Form. Where the parent stops attending their course before the end date of their course, the Childcare Provider will be given up to four weeks notice that the childcare support will stop from the date the LSS discovers this.

**Can Learning Providers use discretionary Learner Support funding to support Care to Learn learners?**

It is for Learning Providers to use their discretion, in accordance with the YPLA guidance and requirements, in allocating hardship funding. However, Discretionary funding cannot be used to 'top up' Care to Learn funding.

**Are Learning Providers required to provide their bank account details on every Learning Provider Registration Form they complete?**

Learning Providers are required to complete a registration form for each learner at their organisation. However, they only need to give their bank details with the first registration form that they complete for the academic year.

## **Communications**

### **Are we able to email childcare attendance monitoring and learner attendance monitoring forms?**

It will not be possible to email childcare and learner attendance monitoring forms.

### **Will Learning Providers and Childcare Providers be informed of what the learner has been informed, and if there are any issues with the other providers?**

Payments for Care to Learn, for childcare, are paid directly by the LSS to the Childcare Provider, and for travel payments are paid to the Learning Provider in order for them to distribute this funding to the learner. Copies of letters sent to the learner are also sent to the support worker identified on their initial application form.

### **How do we start learners on courses if they do not have an NoE, and are therefore unable to access childcare when the course starts?**

It is important that those who work with young parents encourage early application. Young parents can apply for Care to Learn after they have started their course, and the LSS will assess their eligibility for support. However, if the young parent applied outside of 28 days of the start of their course, they will only be eligible for support backdated to the Monday of the week in which the application was received by the LSS. If the young parent submits their application within 28 days of the start of their course, and they are assessed as eligible, they will receive support backdated to the start of their course. Learning Providers should enrol young parents onto their course as they would any other student, and encourage them to apply for support from Care to Learn as soon as possible.

### **I am aware of cuts in Government marketing. How should we be making young parents aware of the service available to them?**

We have made available support materials to help you to raise awareness of this scheme. You can find details of these on the Care to Learn website at <http://caretolearn.ypla.gov.uk/resources>

### **How does the learner obtain a copy of their NoE for their Learning Provider and Childcare Provider if this has been mislaid?**

If the learner has lost or mislaid their Notice of Entitlement and registration forms, they should ring the helpline on **0800 121 8989** to have their NoE re-issued.

### **Can EMA and Care to Learn forms be sent off together?**

If the learner wishes to apply for more than one Learner Support scheme, for example EMA and Care to Learn, they should ring the helpline on **0800 121 8989**, who will send out a copy of both forms to the learner. The learner should return both forms to the LSS; however, these should be returned in the separate envelopes provided with each application form.

### **Who should I contact to discuss Care to Learn funding and a learner's application?**

If the Childcare Provider has a query about the application, or on Care to Learn, they should ring the helpline on **0845 600 7979**.

### **Policy**

#### **What is the policy on Care to Learn funding and those in employment, or on an Apprenticeship?**

Learners undertaking Apprenticeships where they are unwaged and have non-employed status are eligible to receive Care to Learn. Learners undertaking Apprenticeships where they have employed status and are therefore working for 16 hours or more per week are not eligible to receive Care to Learn.

As an employee, an Apprentice is entitled to the usual in-work benefits, such as Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credits. If the Apprentice has children, is aged 16 or over and does paid work of at least 16 hours a week, then they would qualify for tax credits, unless they are already earning £58,000 per year or more.

Young parents on 'employed status' Apprenticeships should check the DirectGov website for information on childcare funding they may be able to claim. They should also talk to Student Services at their Learning Provider, Connexions or their support worker for advice on how to source and claim for available childcare support. Apprentices working fewer than 16 hours per week may also be able to claim Income Support if they are unable to work full-time and do not have enough money to live on.

#### **Can you clarify what you mean by a 'continuing learner'?**

A 'continuing learner' is a young parent who continues in learning for a second academic year. Learners must complete an application for support from Care to Learn each academic year. Learners do not have to be continuing on the same course at the same Learning Provider; unless they are turning 20 during the academic year, or the following year.

#### **Is there a minimum number of hours per week that childcare can be claimed?**

No, there is no minimum number of hours.

#### **Are holidays covered by Care to Learn?**

Yes. Care to Learn will provide childcare support for the use of retainers between the end of one learning period and the beginning of another, for example, half term and summer holidays. The learner does not have to apply separately for retainers over the shorter holidays, such as half terms, Easter and Christmas breaks, as information about this is collected when their Childcare Provider completes their registration form. The weekly maximum amount applies (up to £160 per child per week, up to £175 per child per week in London).

If a learner is on a course that spans two academic years and needs to pay to keep a childcare place open during the summer break the learner will need to complete a separate form to apply for a summer retainer (the summer 2010 form is orange). We will pay up to 8 weeks summer retainer where the learner is assessed as eligible and we are notified before the end of the summer break. If a parent applies for more than eight weeks the case must be referred to the YPLA for a decision.

If a learner has reached the age of 20 and will be starting a new course after the summer break, they are not eligible for the summer retainer as they have reached the maximum age for the scheme.

### **What happens if childcare or learning hours change?**

If there are any changes to Learning Provider or Childcare Provider details (including hours) during the year, the LSS should be notified via a change of circumstance form. The LSS will contact the learner, Childcare Provider or Learning Provider as appropriate to resolve any discrepancies around hours.

### **Can Childcare Providers refuse the young parent?**

It is up to the Childcare Provider whether they accept a child into their care; this is the case regardless of whether the child's parent is eligible to receive Care to Learn funding or not.

### **Can the system acknowledge two-year courses in one application, rather than re-apply for the second year?**

No; learners need to complete an application for Care to Learn each academic year. If their course lasts more than one year, they should outline the full course on the initial application.

### **Can parents get funding for childcare for courses run by nurseries or Children's Centres in receipt of Sure Start funding?**

Young parents who have been accepted onto a publicly funded programme of learning in England that is not solely distance learning, e-learning or higher education, are eligible for Care to Learn as long as they meet the other eligibility criteria.

## **Support Workers**

### **Will you contact the support worker if there is an issue with the application form? Will the LSS keep in contact with the support worker?**

Where the support worker's details are given on the application form, the Learner Support Service will inform the support worker if there are any problems with the application. The support worker may contact the LSS regarding the learner's application if they have any questions. If the support worker's details are not given, then it is not possible for this information to be shared.

## **Attendance**

**What do I record on the attendance monitoring form if the learner has not attended during the month but has not completed their course, or withdrawn from learning?**

If you are confident that the learner is still on programme, then your return should reflect this. You can add a note to the form if you wish, and this may help you with your own records.

**How are learners made accountable for non-attendance?**

The learner, Learning Provider and Childcare Provider all 'sign up' to informing the LSS immediately, when the learner leaves their learning programme.

**What hours should we note down on the registration form if the learner's hours increase when on placement, but are usually less?**

If the placement is a regular activity, you can average the number of hours per week and include an explanatory note when returning the registration form. If the placement is only for one or two weeks out of the course, you should not include those hours on the form and include an explanatory note when returning the registration form.

**Is it understood that the childcare hours required will be longer than the learning hours?**

The scheme will support childcare hours in reasonable excess of learning hours to allow for travel between the Learning Provider and the Childcare Provider. Costs for additional travel between home and the childcare Provider may only be claimed if the cost of the childcare is less than the weekly maximum. However, the total of the two payments must not exceed the weekly maxima.

## **Other**

**What happens when a child turns three and is entitled to LEA funding?**

Learners should claim their Free Early Years Education Entitlement and then claim support from Care to Learn for any extra childcare hours they need in order to undertake their course. It is the responsibility of the learner to notify the LSS if their circumstances change, including if they become entitled to other sources of funding.

**Management Information was received on a regular basis. Will this be re-instated?**

It is not possible for us to resume sending data about Care to Learn applicants owing to issues around the security of transmitting large volumes of personal data. We urge support workers to ensure that their details are entered on Care to Learn application forms so that they may be kept informed of the progress of a learner's application.