

16-19 Bursary Fund

Questions & Answers for Schools, Academies, Colleges, Training Providers and Local Authorities

v.6 23 August 2011

1. What Management Information will we be required to return to the YPLA for the 16-19 bursary fund?

1a. Management information will be required at the end of the 2011/12 academic year. The details will be confirmed by YPLA but we expect that the arrangements will not be that much different from those for the current discretionary hardship funding – for example data on:

- How many vulnerable students were allocated the £1,200 bursary (either in full or pro-rated), and how much did they receive
- How many vulnerable students receiving the bursary were in each of the following categories:
 - receipt of income support
 - care leaver
 - in care (looked after)
 - disabled student in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance
- How many students were supported by a discretionary bursary
- How many discretionary bursaries were granted
- How much was spent on discretionary bursaries in total
- How many discretionary bursaries were made for:
 - books/equipment,
 - additional course costs e.g. trips
 - transport
 - meals
 - accommodation – including whether this will be returned to provider once student received benefits
 - exam re-sit fees
 - other miscellaneous items – specify what

1b. There will be a review of allocations early in the 2011/12 academic year. Providers will be required to submit, by 31st October 2011, details of the number of bursaries that have been awarded to vulnerable students, together with details of the level of funding committed to supporting those vulnerable students.

2. Will there be an audit by the YPLA? What records do I need to keep for audit purposes?

Administration and allocation of bursaries will be subject to the institution's normal governance and audit regimes.

For audit purposes, hard copies of all documentation for the Bursary Fund should be kept for a period of 6 years. Providers may wish to keep electronic records of documents, but hard copies should also be available. This documentation should include evidence of the application process, documents relating to how the learner was assessed and the funds issued.

3. How do we identify students eligible for the £1,200 bursary?

Providers are responsible for identifying young people who are eligible for this payment. In doing so they will want to seek appropriate evidence from the young person, for example:

- a letter setting out the benefit to which the young person is entitled;

- written confirmation of the young person's current or previous looked-after status from the local authority which looks after them or provides their leaving care services.

4. How do we decide which students should have a discretionary bursary?

Schools, colleges and training providers will be able to determine their own criteria for eligibility for discretionary bursaries, and for deciding the level of awards. We expect that in many cases providers will want to agree a consistent approach across an area, taking account of the needs and circumstances of young people locally.

5. How are we supposed to assess a student's household income?

It is not a requirement of the bursary fund for a student's household income to be assessed, though providers may decide to take account of it as evidenced by receipt of benefit, P60 or Tax Credit Award Notice if employed, or SA302 form or certified accounts if self-employed. Students currently or previously in receipt of free school meals are not automatically entitled to receive a bursary, but this may be taken into account.

6. What if students that should get the £1,200 bursary turn up in January or after our allocation has been used? [See also Q68]

Providers should anticipate that some new or existing students may need extra financial help during the course of the year, and in many cases they will hold back a reserve for that purpose. The YPLA will retain a small contingency fund (£7.5m in 2011/12) to cover the costs of bursaries for the most vulnerable young people in instances where numbers at any one school, college or training provider are such that the provider's initial allocation is either insufficient to meet the guarantee, or meeting the guarantee would result in little or no funds remaining to award discretionary bursaries. See Question 68 for information on how this will be allocated.

7. How do I apply for additional money from the YPLA contingency? [see also Q21 and Q68]

If you think there is an error with your allocation, we will check this as soon as we are able and get back to you. If this is the case, we will correct it. In the autumn, using data from providers as at 30 September re: actual enrolment, vulnerable students and discretionary awards, we will carry out a review and allocate most of the remaining contingency on a fair and equitable basis.

8. What if we overspend or under spend our allocation?

The process for accessing additional funding is outlined in Question 68.

9. Young people from the vulnerable groups may change providers and apply for a second bursary – how do we deal with this?

We expect schools, colleges and training providers to take reasonable steps to ensure that funding is issued in such a way as to keep the risk of 'over-payment' to a minimum, whilst ensuring that the students' needs are met. Providers have the freedom to pay bursaries in instalments, allowing awards to be phased over a course, and to withhold payments if a student stops attending.

We also encourage providers in an area to discuss with each other the principles of how they will allocate their bursary funds to help with this situation.

10. How frequently should we make payments? Do payments need to be upfront or

in arrears?

It is at the discretion of schools, colleges and training providers to design arrangements which best suit local needs and individual circumstances, including the frequency of payments.

11. What conditions should we be applying to payments?

Receipt of a bursary should be conditional on the student meeting agreed standards set by the provider. Providers are free to determine what those conditions should be, and may wish to continue using the principles of the EMA Agreement and agree standards relating to attendance and/or standards of behaviour. This applies to the payments for students in a vulnerable group and other students alike.

12. Is there any advice on bank accounts?

Students aged 16 are able to open a basic bank account, which is offered by 16 members of the British Bankers Association. The basic bank account will allow for receipt of the bursary, including by cashless means, and will allow funds to be withdrawn via ATMs as well as via standing orders and direct debits where necessary.

Where bursary payments are to be made to a bank account, they should only be made to the student's bank account. Payments should not be made into another person's account, except in exceptional circumstances where a student is unable to administer their own account. Payments may be made to a joint account, as long as the student is one of the account holders.

If a student has a Post Office account, it should be noted that these accounts do not accept payments by BACs.

If a student has a Credit Union account, the student should check with the Credit Union that it will receive payments made by BACs.

13. What sort of 'in kind' payments are acceptable?

There is no restriction on what 'in kind' payments may be made under the bursary scheme. Examples of 'in kind' payments are: travel passes, meals, course materials.

14. How will we know if a student was entitled to Free School Meals in Year 11? [see also Q50]

Young people currently or previously in receipt of free school meals are not automatically entitled to receive a bursary, but this may be taken into account. Arrangements for checking eligibility for free school meals vary between local authority areas; providers may wish to discuss with other providers and with the local authority ways to ensure relevant data is shared appropriately and securely.

15. Transport – can we use the bursary funding to operate a bus route to get students here?

The overriding principle of the 16-19 Bursary funding is that it should respond to **individual** need where there is a barrier to participation.

Local authorities have a duty to ensure that students aren't prevented from attending learning because there's no transport available, or because they can't afford the fares.

Bursaries to help meet transport costs should be targeted to individual students, where those costs have been identified as a real barrier to that student's participation, and should

not be used to block subsidise the provision of transport.

16. Will there be a 'last date' cut-off when students can apply for the discretionary 16-19 Bursaries?

Providers can manage the administration of the discretionary bursary awards as they see fit – they should manage the number and size of these within their annual budget. Many providers will encourage that requests for bursaries are submitted by a certain date, so they can assess the overall level of demand and make awards on a fair basis. But it is inevitable that some needs will develop in-year so there should be no absolute cut-off date.

17. How do we deal with complaints or appeals about our decisions on bursary funding?

If a student feels aggrieved about how their request for a bursary was handled, they should follow the provider's usual complaints procedure.

18. My school/college is in England, near the Welsh/Scottish border. Can my students who reside in Wales/Scotland apply for 16-19 bursary funding at my school/college?

If a Welsh/Scottish student is studying at a provider in England they may apply for support from the bursary fund. If the student is in receipt of Welsh/Scottish EMA, or English EMA under the transitional arrangements (for 2011/12 only), the provider must take account of this when deciding whether to award a bursary and at what level.

19. What support is a student entitled to apply for if they are living in England and studying in Wales/Scotland?

English students studying at colleges in Wales and Scotland will be eligible to apply to the appropriate discretionary support scheme operated by their college. Students at school in Wales (where the school does not have access to a discretionary support scheme) may apply for a 16-19 bursary from their home local authority.

20. Are young people in Apprenticeships programmes eligible to apply for 16-19 bursary support?

Young people on waged Apprenticeship programmes are not eligible to apply for support. Young people on a non-waged Programme-led Apprenticeship or an Access to Apprenticeship pathway are eligible to apply for bursary support.

21. I did not have any learners on EMA in 2009/10 but I have learners in hardship and no allocation – how do I apply for one? [see also Q7 and 68]

Where this is the case, we will consider making funds available from the contingency held by YPLA. The process for new providers to access funding is outlined in Question 68.

22. I did not have any learners on EMA in 2009/10 and I have been given an allocation – how has it been calculated?

You may previously have received discretionary learner support funding. The allocations for the 16-19 Bursary Fund have been made to ensure that no provider receives less under the 16-19 Bursary Fund in 2011/12 than they did under the arrangements for Discretionary Learner Support Fund in 2010/11.

Where possible, eligible new providers who did not administer EMA in 09/10 have been

given an allocation of the bursary fund. This has been based on an average proportion of learners who claimed EMA at £30 per week.

23. I am a Private/ Independent/ Non-Standard Institution and had learners in receipt of EMA in 2009/10 and 2010/11 but I have not been given an allocation – why not?

We will be writing to those institutions this applies to.

To be eligible for an allocation of the 16-19 Bursary funding, learning provision must be eligible for public funding and subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (e.g. Ofsted). Full details are set out in the guide to the 16-19 bursary guide.

Should a learning provider demonstrate that its provision would meet eligibility, allocation of the funding will be considered.

24. Which type of schools, colleges and training providers are eligible for an allocation of 16-19 bursary fund?

As allocations have been made on the basis of the number of young people at each provider in receipt of Education Maintenance Allowance at the £30/week rate in 2009/10, those providers have formed the basis of the 'eligible provider list'.

Where a provider had EMA learners in 09/10 but does not meet the criteria of being eligible for public funding **and** subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (e.g. Ofsted), they have not been awarded a bursary fund allocation.

25. As a school, college or training provider how will I be made aware of our allocation and if we are to receive one?

A letter will be/has been sent to each provider, including Academies, confirming the level of their allocation.

Funding for bursaries for students in maintained school sixth forms will be paid via local authorities, who will pass the designated funding directly to the school. The school is then responsible for administering the fund. Local authorities will also be allocated funds, as appropriate, to cover students in maintained Pupil Referral Units, maintained Special Schools and a small number of other providers for whom the LA is best placed to administer the bursaries.

Where a provider operates out of more than one location across England, or through sub-contracts, the allocation will be made to the lead office for distribution to each site. Messages confirming that allocations letters have been issued to providers will be sent out to existing EMA providers by email, on the YPLA website, in the YPLA bulletin and to representative organisations such as AoC, LGA, ALP, NAMSS.

26. It seems unfair that some colleges are advertising their own internal bursary fund – we cannot compete with that: what does DfE plan to do to overcome this and ensure that some colleges do not have a competitive edge?

There is no reason why a provider cannot add to the Bursary Fund from other financial resources, so as to make even more financial help available to young learners.

Beyond the payments to young people in the identified vulnerable groups, the 16-19 Bursary fund is discretionary. Schools, colleges and training providers are able to

determine how it is allocated to young people. We will be monitoring the use of the 16-19 Bursary funding in its first year.

We are aware that the London Councils are working to establish a common set of practices around bursary administration and allocation in London. The Association of Colleges has produced an administration advice document, which offers examples for administering the bursary that providers can follow if they wish. This document is available via their [website](http://www.aoc.co.uk/en/newsroom/aoc_news_releases.cfm/id/77BA0202-5F54-4E27-B706E589F64A9F24/page/1) at

http://www.aoc.co.uk/en/newsroom/aoc_news_releases.cfm/id/77BA0202-5F54-4E27-B706E589F64A9F24/page/1

We would encourage schools and colleges to work together to develop local approaches to operating the funding.

27. I am confused about the arrangements for continuing EMA next year: who gets it and who will make the payments?

Transitional arrangements are in place for students previously in receipt of EMA:

- Students who successfully applied for EMA in 2009/10 will continue to be eligible to receive weekly payments at the same rate that they were awarded in 2009/10.
- Students who successfully applied for the maximum EMA weekly payment of £30 in 2010/11 will continue to be eligible to receive £20 for each week they are in education or training.
- Students who successfully applied for EMA payments of £10 or £20 in 2010/11 are not eligible to continue to receive any further EMA payments in 2011/12 under the transitional arrangements.

Where a student's EMA application is reassessed in-year following an exceptional change in circumstance, the rate paid following reassessment will be dependant on the year in which the student first applied for EMA, and will determine which of the three categories above applies to that student.

Where a student has turned 19 before the start of the 2011/12 academic year, they will not be eligible to continue to receive weekly payments and they will not be sent a Notice of Entitlement.

The Learner Support Service will continue to make weekly payments, and schools, colleges and training providers are required to continue making weekly payment decisions in LAPS for those learners who are in receipt of support under the transitional arrangements, or by using any relevant 3PI software that the provider operates.

28. Will the YPLA be writing to EMA learners to tell them of the new arrangements for next year?

In a rolling programme over July 2011, Notices of Entitlement (NoE) will be issued to those students who are eligible to continue to receive weekly payments under the transitional arrangements.

The Learner Support Service will write to all students who will not be eligible to continue to receive weekly payments to confirm this to them and to advise that they may be able to receive support from the 16-19 bursary fund.

29. If any of my students are eligible for continued EMA next year, instead of taking them off EMA and giving them £1,200 from the 16-19 bursary funds, would it be acceptable for these students to keep their EMA and for providers to top up to £1,200? [see also Q32]

No. Providers are asked not to authorise weekly payments under the transitional arrangements for young people who are eligible for the £1,200 bursary, but to make arrangements to pay that bursary directly to the young person. We have put sufficient funding into the 16-19 Bursary Fund that will be allocated to schools, colleges and training providers in 2011/12 for them to pay the £1,200 bursary to the most vulnerable young people. The YPLA will hold a small contingency to deal with situations in which a provider's allocation is insufficient for them to meet the costs of the bursary to this group; see Question 68.

30. Will the YPLA be letting learners know about the new bursary fund? Or is this the responsibility of providers?

The letters to EMA recipients will include advice about support from the 16-19 bursary fund.

Because the funding is essentially discretionary, communications from providers will be the main way that many young people hear about the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

We would therefore encourage providers to raise the awareness of the 16-19 Bursary Fund, including locally set eligibility criteria, amongst young people, particularly the most vulnerable.

Aside from that, YPLA and DfE will be developing communications activities focusing on raising awareness of the 16-19 Bursary funding among young people and the professionals who work with them.

31. How has my allocation been calculated?

Allocations have been made on the basis of the number of young people who were at each provider and in receipt of Education Maintenance Allowance at the £30/week rate in 2009/10, multiplied by the standard funding rate of £190 per eligible young person. The sector was consulted in the first half of 2011 and responses confirmed that allocations based on this methodology would be preferred.

It does not affect the overall coverage of the 16-19 Bursary Fund, which is sufficient (as an illustrative figure) to allow bursaries of £800 to all young people who were in receipt of Free School Meals in year 11.

32. I have students who are now classed as vulnerable, but they will be eligible for EMA next year. Do I have to give them £1,200? [see also Q29]

Where a student is in one of the identified vulnerable groups, they are eligible for a minimum bursary payment of £1,200. Schools, colleges and training providers should not enrol these students for EMA payments under the transitional arrangements.

Where a student is receiving EMA payments under the transitional arrangements in 2011/12 and becomes classed as vulnerable during the year, the provider should pro-rate

any subsequent 16-19 bursary awards.

33. How do I know how much a young person is receiving under the transitional arrangements?

Young people aged 17 on 31 August 2011 who are being supported under transitional arrangements will be receiving £20 a week. Older students are likely to be receiving either £30, £20 or £10. The provider may ask the student to evidence the amount of their weekly payments; the Learner Support Service is not authorised to disclose this information.

34. Even after I have allocated funds to the most vulnerable students my allocation does not seem to be sufficient: can I have extra funding? [see also Q7 and 68]

The YPLA will retain a small contingency fund to cover the costs of bursaries for the most vulnerable young people in instances where numbers at any one school, college or training provider are such that the provider's initial allocation is either insufficient to meet the guarantee, or meeting the guarantee would result in little or no funds remaining to award discretionary bursaries. The process for accessing additional funding is outlined in Question 68.

35. What is the definition of a care leaver? How long does a student need to be out of care to still qualify for a bursary? [further clarification is given at Q61 and 62]

Care Leavers are:

- young people aged 18-21 who have been looked after for 13 weeks or more since the age of 14, or
- young people who cease to be looked after or accommodated.

Young people aged 19 and over on the day their course starts are not eligible for a bursary.

36. Is the Vulnerable Young People group final? If I have a learner who is not in the defined category but I believe to be vulnerable, can I award them £1,200?

The group of young people identified as vulnerable for the purposes of the £1,200 is final.

Beyond this, schools, colleges and training organisations are able to use their discretion to award bursaries to young people who are not in one of the vulnerable groups. If they think it necessary (and if their budget allows) they can award £1,200 (or more) to a learner who has major financial difficulties but is not in one of the defined vulnerable groups.

37. What about asylum seekers? Are they eligible for the bursary?

The residency criteria for the bursary fund are in line with the criteria in the YPLA Funding Guidance 2011/12: Funding Regulations. If a student that is an asylum seeker is also in one of the identified vulnerable groups, then they will be eligible for a £1,200 bursary.

Schools, colleges and training providers will be able to use their discretion to award bursaries to young people who are not in one of the identified vulnerable groups.

38. Since the announcement that the bursary fund can be used for transport, our local authority has withdrawn all/ some financial support for transport for 16-19 students. Our allocation will now be swallowed up by demands for transport support - can we therefore have extra funding?

The overriding principle of the 16-19 Bursary funding is that it should respond to individual

need where there is a barrier to participation.

Local authorities have a duty to ensure that students aren't prevented from attending learning because there's no transport available, or because they can't afford the fares.

Local Authorities are required to prepare and publish a transport policy statement each year that specifies what arrangements for the provision of transport, and for financial assistance towards transport costs, they consider necessary to facilitate the attendance of young people of sixth form age.

We would advise parents and students who feel that their local authority's transport provision is placing a barrier upon their access to education, to lodge an appeal with the local authority in the first instance.

39. Paragraph 19 of the Bursary Guide says that I cannot use the bursary fund for block provision of equipment, however paragraph 21 says that I should look at bulk purchasing of equipment with other colleges to save money. We plan to do a bulk purchase of catering uniforms for learners in conjunction with a local college and then to allocate the uniforms to learners in hardship: does this mean that we cannot use the bursary fund to purchase this?

The 16-19 Bursary fund could be used in these circumstances as the plan is to allocate to those in hardship and not to make the equipment generally available, i.e. including for students who would be able to purchase the equipment themselves. It would not be appropriate, however, for a college to make such a bulk purchase using the bursary fund and then not to target the materials/equipment purchased towards those facing the most significant financial barriers to participation.

40. We plan to operate an internal bursary fund from our own funds as well as the national one given by the YPLA. Can we mix and match the funds and their use?

There is nothing to prevent a school, college or training organisation topping up the 16-19 Bursary fund with other funding to support young people facing financial barriers to learning.

41. I subcontract some of my provision to another provider: has my allocation taken into account the EMA learners who were at that provider in 2009/10?

Yes - Where a provider operates through sub-contracts, the allocation will be made to the lead office for distribution to each site. Providers should ensure that any young people attending provision that is delivered by sub-contractors are able to apply for the 16-19 Bursary Fund. It is the provider's responsibility to ensure that the scheme's objectives are met at each site and by any sub-contractors.

42. I subcontract some of my provision to another provider: they currently have a large number of learners in hardship but my allocation does not reflect this as those learners did not receive EMA in 2009/10. Can this allocation be adjusted?

All provision must meet the eligibility criteria (be eligible for public funding and subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality e.g. Ofsted).

The process for accessing additional funding and a review of allocations is outlined in Question 68.

43. How will the 2012/13 allocations be calculated when there will be no similar EMA data?

We will be reviewing the allocations methodology for future years following monitoring of the implementation of the current scheme.

44. The Bursary Guide says that we have to pro-rata bursary payments for courses that are less than 30 weeks – what does this mean? How much bursary should I give to a student from a vulnerable group who is only doing a 6 week course for example?

Taking this example, if a vulnerable student on a 30 week course is eligible for a bursary of £1,200, a vulnerable student on a 6 week course would be eligible for a pro-rated bursary of £240, calculated as follows:

**(Full bursary £1,200) divided by (full time course for 30 weeks)
times (part time course at 6 weeks) equals £240**

45. Where a learner is on a course for more than one academic year, and they are vulnerable, do they get £1,200 each year?

The £1,200 would be payable for each academic year the young person is in education or training.

46. Will you be publishing a list of all school, college and training providers' allocations? If so, when and where?

We plan to publish the finalised details of provider allocations for the 16-19 Bursary Fund alongside the allocations for participation funding in August. These will be published on the YPLA Extranet.

47. I am a Local Authority, what do I do if a school, college or training provider, or a student (vulnerable or otherwise), turns up asking for a bursary – the provider is not on my list of allocated providers?

The list at Annex C is not exhaustive of institutions where you might make a bursary award. The list is of institutions where there have previously been young people on EMA, which is the basis upon which we have calculated your allocation. In practice, some that previously had EMA students might actually not have much need of bursaries, whereas other institutions might have greater need. So in the first instance we would encourage you to manage the award of bursaries to all such providers in your area within your overall allocation.

Should you find that demand is greater than your allocation allows, the YPLA does hold a contingency and may be able to top-up, particularly if there are significant institutions that did not feature in the Annex C list. The process for accessing additional funding is outlined in Question 68.

48. Are there any types of provider that can't access the bursary fund?

To be eligible for an allocation of the 16-19 Bursary funding, learning provision must be eligible for public funding and subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (e.g. Ofsted).

49. The consultation document said that £180m was available for the Bursary Fund in 11/12, with an additional £194m for the transitional support arrangements for young people currently in receipt of EMA. But now it appears that the £180m includes the transitional support – what has happened to the £194m?

2011/12 is a transitional year. A large number of the young people who might be expected to benefit from the Bursary Fund will be receiving weekly payments as a result of the transitional support arrangements.

The £115m that we will allocate to schools, colleges and training providers is sufficient for them to pay guaranteed bursaries to all vulnerable young people, to pay discretionary bursaries to young people starting post-16 education or training for the first time, and to 'top up' those weekly payments for young people currently in receipt of EMA if they consider it appropriate to do so.

Additional questions added 29th June 2011

50. Are we expected to give £800 to all students who are on Free School Meals?

No, providers are free to determine the size of bursaries. The figure of £800 was an indicative figure used by Ministers to illustrate that, if for example a college decided to focus its bursaries on students who had previously been on Free School Meals, they'd typically be able to make each award worth about £800. It is an example only and is not intended to suggest you need to base your awards on those students who previously had Free School Meals, or to award all students £800.

The philosophy behind the bursary fund is that schools, colleges, academies and other providers will use their discretion, because they are best placed to assess the needs of their students.

51. I understand that Adult Learning Grant (ALG) will not be available to students in 2011/12. Can students who are 19 apply for a bursary?

No. A new enhanced adult learner support fund will be operational from 2011/12. The Adult Learning Grant (ALG) budget will be combined with discretionary learner support, and allocated directly to colleges and training providers for them to distribute to those learners most in need. In 2011-12 this amounts to around £152m, and this amount will increase over the Spending Review period.

The support for 16-18 and 19+ is allocated to providers from two Departments, with separate accountability. Providers will need to continue to manage and account for budgets separately, which will be subject to audit.

Learners who will not be supported by transitional arrangements for ALG, and who are 19 and over should contact their college or other provider to see if they can access support from the enhanced adult learner support fund.

52. Has the 16-19 Bursary Fund replaced the 16-18 discretionary Learner Support fund that we received last year?

Yes, 16-18 discretionary Learner Support has been replaced by the 16-19 Bursary Fund for academic year 2011/12 onwards.

53. Will the YPLA offer any other support to providers in implementing this scheme?

The YPLA have produced a Q&A for young people and parents, to help providers answer queries.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced a factsheet aimed at young people giving information on the new Bursary Fund. They will also produce a leaflet and a poster, which providers can use; we will let you know when this becomes available through the YPLA e-bulletin.

54. Are we able to award students who fall into the vulnerable group less than £1,200, if they do not need the full amount?

Students are entitled to receive a bursary of £1,200 for the academic year, if they fall into the vulnerable group. Providers would need to have a clear agreement with the student about why they were awarding less than £1,200.

55. Is there a limit to how much funding can be given to a non-vulnerable student? Can they have more than £1,200?

Providers are able to manage the payments from the 16-19 Bursary Fund as they see fit, within their annual budget. There are no limits set for the level of payment awarded to non-vulnerable students wishing to access support from the Fund. However, allocations to providers assume a payment of £1,200 to young people in the vulnerable groups and providers who give more will need to take this into account in order to stay within their budget.

56. If a student in a vulnerable group is doing a part-time course for more than 30 weeks, how much bursary should they receive?

Students are entitled to receive a bursary of £1,200 for the academic year, if they fall into the vulnerable group. This amount can be topped up, if providers feel that this is appropriate and they have sufficient capacity within their budget.

57. If a student in a vulnerable group is doing a part-time course for less than 30 weeks, how much bursary should they receive?

The most vulnerable young people will be eligible for a bursary of at least £1,200 (pro-rata for courses lasting less than 30 weeks a year). Providers have the discretion to decide how best to distribute this over the duration of the course.

However, £1,200 is a lot of money to pay in one go, but dividing it up into weekly payments of £33.33 (over 36 weeks) could be administratively burdensome. Some Colleges are planning weekly payments to ensure their Bursary system matches their EMA monitoring system. A middle way might be to operate termly payments (3 a year), half-termly (6 a year) or monthly (10 a year). It might be sensible also to run a common system for all 2011/12 bursaries but this will depend on the size of the payment.

58. Where a student is on one of the Apprenticeships that are exempt from being employed-status, can they receive support from the Bursary Fund?

If a student is undertaking one of these Apprenticeships, they may receive support from the Bursary Fund for the period that they are not in receipt of a wage.

59. How will DfE/YPLA ensure that providers (whose allocation may actually be quite generous in 2011/12) do not give their learners an over-generous level of bursary?

We will be monitoring the operation of the scheme closely and evaluating its impact. We will undertake a review of funding in the autumn – further details are at Question 68.

60. Have any negotiations taken place with DWP about the treatment of any financial support offered to 16-19 year olds with regards to the impact on household benefits?

The DfE have been in discussions with DWP to agree that they update their regulations to reflect that income-related benefits (which currently include a disregard of any payments of EMA) should now refer to the 16 - 19 Bursaries in the same way.

As with EMA, the 16-19 Bursaries are paid directly to young people in addition to other benefits paid to families by the Government, such as Income Support, Child Benefit, Working Tax Credit, and do not affect them.

Additional questions added 12th July 2011

61. Can you give more explanation on the definition of a care leaver? [see also Q35]

The following definitions should be applied:

- Eligible children ('looked after'); this is a child who is looked after, aged 16 or 17, and has been looked after for a period of 13 weeks or periods amounting to 13 weeks, which began after s/he reached 14 and ended after s/he reached 16.
- Relevant children ('care leavers'); this is defined as a child who is not looked after, is aged 16 or 17, and was, before s/he ceased to be looked after, an eligible child.
- Former relevant children ('care leavers'); this is defined as a young person who is aged 18 or above, and has been either a relevant child and would be one if s/he were under 18, or immediately before s/he ceased to be looked after at 18, was an eligible child.

62. Can you clarify the age eligibility for the Bursary Fund? The definition of a care leaver gives ages 18-21, but the bursary fund gives an upper age limit of 19.

Eligibility for the 16-19 Bursary Fund falls within the age range specified in the guide; young people must be under 19 on the day their course starts. Young people who are care leavers aged 19 and over on the day their course starts are not eligible to receive support from the bursary fund.

Additional questions added 4th August 2011

63. We have a number of schools (and other providers) who wish to implement a collaborative approach to the management of the 16-19 Bursary Fund, which will include pooling funds and central management. Is there any reason we cannot take this approach?

There are no reasons why you should not take this approach. Indeed, it should help the establishment of a consistent approach to meet local needs, as suggested in paragraph 29 of the Guide and question 26 of this Q&A.

However, this will have implications for MI and budget reporting. Collaborations must be prepared to submit an MI return for each provider involved.

64. Will you be providing an Equality Analysis on the Bursary Fund policy?

A full Equality Impact Assessment for the 16-19 Bursary was published in March 2011 and is available on the Department for Education website

(<http://www.education.gov.uk/16to19/studentsupport/financialsupport/a0064057/financial-support-for-learning>).

Providers are responsible for developing their own arrangements for the administration of the 16-19 Bursary Fund within their organisation; as stated in the Guide for 2011/12, providers should develop a statement on how they will administer and distribute their funds. As part of this, providers will want to consider undertaking their own Equality Analysis of their emerging Bursary Fund administration policies.

65. We have some learners who are receiving Incapacity Benefit rather than ESA. Are they eligible for a bursary?

Yes. ESA was introduced in October 2008 to replace Incapacity Benefit for sick and disabled people; therefore, there are some people in receipt of Incapacity Benefit, and some in receipt of ESA until all have been transferred onto ESA.

Therefore, where a young person aged between 16 and 19 is in full-time education and is in receipt of both Incapacity Benefit and DLA, they would fall into the vulnerable group and would be eligible for the £1,200 bursary payment.

66. Does the vulnerable group include children of armed service personnel who have died in service, or are the children of serving armed services personnel?

No. The Ministry of Defence is operating a separate scheme to provide scholarships set at £1,500 per year to 16-18 year old children of service personnel who have died as a result of their service. The intention of this FE scholarship is to ensure that these young people are able to complete their education and progress to Higher Education (HE). The scheme differs from a learner support scheme such as the Bursary Fund in that it is extra support in recognition of the position of young people in these circumstances.

For progression to HE for young people in these circumstances, the Ministry of Defence is offering a university scholarship which will contribute to the cost of taking a first undergraduate course at a publicly-funded UK higher education institution.

Further information on the scheme and how to apply can be found on the Ministry of Defence website:

<http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/WhatWeDo/Personnel/SPVA/Education/ScholarshipSchemeForBereavedServiceChildren.htm>

Young people who are the children of serving armed forces service personnel, while not included in the identified vulnerable group, will be able to apply for a discretionary 16-19 Bursary from their school or college.

67. Are young people are in a foyer/hostel aged 16-18 counted as looked after?

It should not automatically be assumed that a person living in a foyer/hostel is or has been 'looked after'/in care (under section 20 of the Children Act 1989). It would usually be the local authority that would confirm whether a child is in care or a care leaver. If a young person is unknown to the local authority then, unless they have moved in from another local authority, it may be that they are not, or have never been, looked after.

It is anticipated that the young person will provide appropriate evidence (to the learning provider) of being looked after, or a care leaver, in the form of written confirmation of their

current or previous looked after status from the local authority which looks after them or provides their leaving care services.

Additional information added 11th August 2011

68. The Process for allocating funding from the contingency

This note sets out the arrangements that YPLA will operate if a college, school, academy, training provider or local authority requests an addition to the allocation that it received in June 2011 for the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

Some £108m has been allocated to providers using a methodology that received by far the most support in the public consultation and is based on EMA take-up. This also included a general allowance for the number of students who would qualify for a bursary of at least £1200 because they are in one of the defined vulnerable groups. However, it was recognised that there would be some cases where particular circumstances apply; in particular some providers may have unusually high numbers in the priority groups. Therefore the YPLA is retaining £7m as contingency.

The YPLA guarantees to make extra payments from the contingency to any provider who has more students in the defined vulnerable groups than they can afford to pay full bursaries from their original allocation. In addition:

- In the autumn, using data from providers as at 30 September re: actual enrolment, vulnerable students and discretionary awards, we will carry out a review and allocate most of the remaining contingency on a fair and equitable basis. (We will retain a small element for any further in-year cases.)
- Ahead of that, we will consider any emergency requests for extra funds, either relating to the number of awards to students in the vulnerable groups, or because the proportion of allocation left after those awards is exceptionally small. We will apply the same criteria that we will use in the autumn review, and should any of the assumptions in a provider's business case subsequently prove erroneous, we may request re-imbursement. An early additional allocation will neither advantage nor disadvantage any provider as its case will be reviewed again in the autumn as part of the national exercise.
- After we have received the data returns (which must be submitted by 31 October) the review will first allocate extra payments to any provider whose allocation did not meet the cost of awards to vulnerable students. The remainder of the contingency will then be allocated to providers who have the lowest remaining allocation for discretionary awards. The expectation at this point is that we will be able to top-up the allocation of any provider who had less than 20% of their original allocation available for discretionary awards.
- It is clearly important that all providers send in their September data returns, and any bids for extra allocations should be supported by a business case (which can take the form of a simple letter) to the designated inbox 1619bursaryfund@ypla.gov.uk.

Further information on the 16-19 Bursary Fund is available on the website at <http://www.ypla.gov.uk/learnersupport/16-19-bursary>