

# Residential Support Scheme Guidance 2011/12

June 2011

► For guidance

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## Introduction

This document has been updated for the 2011/12 academic year (29 August 2011 to 26 August 2012). Do not use this document after August 2012. Please check the website to make sure that you are using the correct version.

The Residential Support Scheme (RSS) is intended to support students who need to live away from home in order to study because their course is not available within reasonable daily travelling distance of home.

The Government is committed to ensuring that students continue to be supported to access specialist education. Support will be available from the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) for those young people and adults who receive awards for residential support in 2011/12 and continue their learning in 2012/13.

DfE envisage that, from 2012/13, distinct 16-18 'residential bursary' and 'residential support' schemes will cease, to be replaced by a simpler means of providing residential support to enable young people to access provision with a residential element and specialist provision that is not available locally. Responsibility for post-19 student support remains with BIS, who is looking to develop a more coherent and simplified approach to learner support.

To inform the development of future support arrangements, DfE and BIS have commissioned the Skills Funding Agency to review how young people and adults are currently supported to access specialist provision with a residential element and specialist provision that is not available locally.

This guidance is aimed at all those involved in the delivery of the RSS. It provides general guidance – it is not intended to offer definitive advice on every possible situation.

There are also two telephone helplines to provide support to Learning Providers and stakeholders, and to students. These are:

- Learner Support Service Provider helpline: **0845 600 7979**
- Learner Support Service learner helpline: **0800 121 8989**

Application forms and pre-paid return envelopes are available to order:

- Learners can order a pack from the LSS by calling **0800 121 8989**
- Providers can order a number of packs from YPLA Publications by calling **0845 602 2260** or emailing [ypla@prolog.co.uk](mailto:ypla@prolog.co.uk), quoting the reference number **YPLA-G-005/2011**.

Guidance Notes are issued with the application form to assist students and Learning Providers with completion.

## Summary of changes for 2011/12

The key policy changes introduced from 2010/11 but now included in guidance for the 2011/12 academic year are:

- Removal of requirement for the student's signature.
- Change in bodies who will need to confirm no similar provision available locally, see page 4.
- Introduction of Guidance Notes for completion of the application form.
- The Learning Provider will no longer need to check tenancy agreements; these will now be checked by the Learner Support Service. A copy of the tenancy agreement must be submitted with the application form if available.

## Eligibility criteria

The student must:

- be aged 16 or over;
- have a household income of £30,993 or less for the previous tax year;
- be offered a place on a full-time course of Learner Responsive provision at Level 2 or Level 3;
- be ordinarily resident in England and have lived in England for the three years preceding the start of the course;
- plan to attend a course with a minimum duration of 10 weeks, and at least 15 hours attendance a week;
- be living in term-time lodgings that are no further than 15 miles from the Learning Provider campus.

In the vast majority of cases, support should either be for the student's first Level 2 or first Level 3 qualification. However, support for repeat qualifications will be provided in a small number of cases where:

- a young person aged 16–18 wishes to pursue a second Level 2 which is vocational, when their first Level 2 was not;
- the student is seeking to study a second Level 3 as preparation for entry into higher education, and the Level 3 course has an existing Level 3 qualification as an entry requirement.

In some exceptional circumstances support will be provided at Level 1.

RSS will provide annual support up to £3,458 (£4,079 in the London area) towards residential living costs. Support is awarded on a proportionate basis.

The amounts available are income-assessed and the scales for the 2011/12 academic year are shown in the table below.

### **Scales based on income-assessment for tax year 2010-11**

<b>Gross Income Level</b>	<b>Outside London</b>	<b>Inside London</b>
Up to £21,000	£3,458	£4,079
£21,001 and up to £25,704	£2,305	£2,685
£25,705 and up to £30,993	£1,152	£1,355
£30,994 and over	Nil	Nil

A small number of Learning Providers in England are **not** part of RSS, and operate their own bursary schemes for residential support. Students at these providers should apply for residential support to their Student Support Manager. These providers are listed on the Directgov website at <http://moneytolearn.direct.gov.uk/residentialbursary/>.

## **Application Process**

Where learning starts on or after 29 August 2011, the 2011/12 application form should be used.

Students can apply to RSS after their course has started but awards will only be backdated to the beginning of the term in which the application was made. The final deadline for receipt of applications for 2011/12 is 26 August 2012.

Students must have an unconditional offer of a place before applying to RSS. They should then complete an application form and return it to their Learning Provider.

The Learning Provider should then seek confirmation that a similar course is not available locally. They should do so from the home local authority in the case of young people 16-18, and from the home Skills Funding Agency Account Manager in the case of students aged 19 and over. Having done so, they should complete the declaration on the form (including the contact details of who has been consulted) and return the form to the student.

Once all parts of the application have been completed it should be returned to the Learner Support Service in the pre-paid envelope provided, along with a copy of the tenancy agreement to the following address:

Freepost RSLX-GSLZ-RBGE  
Learner Support Service  
Birmingham  
B24 9FD

The student must include a copy of the tenancy agreement with their application form, if this has been agreed and signed. The tenancy agreement must show the following information:

- the student's name
- the dates of the tenancy
- the student's term time address
- the landlord's name, address and signature
- the cost of the rent

If the student does not send a tenancy agreement with the application form, only a provisional Notice of Entitlement can be issued – **no payments can be released from the Learner Support Service until the tenancy agreement is received.**

The Learner Support Service will inform both the Learning Provider and the student of the outcome of the application.

## Payments and monitoring

Payments are sent to Learning Providers at the beginning of each term for the provider to pay the landlord or agency directly. Learning Providers must retain proof of payment.

If the student has already paid the rent, providers may refund the student's costs (not outside the period agreed in the award) but should again retain proof of payment.

The Learner Support Service will contact the Learning Provider to monitor the attendance of the student and confirm that they are meeting the terms of their Learning Agreement.

If the Learner Support Service finds that the student is not meeting the terms of their Agreement or has left the course, they will ensure that funds are recovered, if appropriate.

## Annex A: Definition of terms

Inside London <sup>1</sup>	Learning Providers in London Boroughs
Home local authority	The local authority that is local to the student's home address
Home Skills Funding Agency	The Skills Funding Agency office that is local to the student's home address
Full Level 2	Five GCSEs at grades A*–C or an NVQ at Level 2 or its equivalent
Full Level 3	Two A-levels or an NVQ Level 3 or its equivalent
Reasonable daily travelling distance	A daily return journey which takes under two hours by public transport, or a distance of under 15 miles from the student's home to the Learning Provider
Similar provision	Where courses have the same learning aim reference number as held on the Learning Aim Database; and the content of the course fulfils the awarding body's criteria
Ordinarily resident	Settled in the UK and resident in England for the three years preceding the relevant date. 'Settled' means having either indefinite leave to enter or remain (ILE/R) or having the right of abode in the UK. British citizens and certain other people have the right of abode in the UK

<sup>1</sup> 'inside London' means a Provider in a London Borough. The London Boroughs are: Barking & Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Camden, City of London, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith & Fulham, Haringey, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea, Kingston Upon Thames, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Newham, Redbridge, Richmond Upon Thames, Southwark, Sutton, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Wandsworth, Westminster.

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