

THE NEW 16-19 BURSARY – YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

What is the new bursary?

The 16-19 Bursary is a new £180 million scheme to help the most vulnerable young people continue in full-time education.

The scheme is made up of two parts:

- There are guaranteed bursaries of £1,200 a year for the most vulnerable. Around 12,000 young people are in this group, made up of children in care, care leavers and those on income support. Income support is paid to young people such as teenage parents, teenagers living away from their parents and young people whose parents have died.
- Schools, colleges and training providers will then be able to award bursaries to any student who faces genuine financial barriers to staying on in education and training to help with costs such as transport, food or equipment.

What about young people who currently get EMAs?

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 a guaranteed bursary of £1,200 a year, in place of their current weekly payments.
- All other 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.
- Those 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.

How much will young people get?

This will depend on their circumstances. Vulnerable young people are guaranteed bursaries of £1,200 a year (around £40 per week over a 30 week teaching year). This is more than they would have received through the

Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA). Schools and colleges will have flexibility to pay more to young people who need it.

For other young people it will be entirely down to their college how much they get. Students currently receiving EMA are also eligible for funds as above.

As an illustration, the new fund would be sufficient to provide a bursary of £800 a year to more than 15% of 16-19 year olds in full-time education, to cover the costs of food, transport, books and other course-related essentials.

When is this happening?

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

Who decides who will get money?

Those in one of the defined groups of vulnerable young people are guaranteed funds. For all others, colleges will decide and have the flexibility to pay larger or smaller bursaries to the young people who most need funds to stay on in education or training.

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 and colleges may choose to pay the full bursary as a cash payment or may provide 'in kind' support under the bursary scheme, for example, by bulk purchasing equipment that students need for particular courses.

Why are you getting rid of EMAs?

The EMA scheme cost £560m a year. The evidence showed around 90 per cent of those who received EMA would have carried on their education without it. The high cost is no longer affordable and we believe it's more appropriate to give vulnerable young people support than give all young people an incentive to stay in education. The new fund is a better use of public money and guarantees protection for the most vulnerable young people in need.

How are you defining 'vulnerable' young people?

The 'vulnerable' group is made up of children in care, care leavers and those on income support. Income support is paid to young people such as some teenage parents, teenagers who are estranged from their parents and some young people whose parents have died.

When can I apply for a bursary?

All bursaries – including those for the most vulnerable young people – will be administered by schools, colleges and training providers, who will set out details of how the scheme will operate locally.

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

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

When will the money be available?

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

How do we know Colleges will be fair?

The Department for Education will monitor the use of the 16-19 Bursary Fund closely in the first year of its operation. Schools, colleges and work-based training providers should all have established complaints processes. They are the first place to go for any young person who thinks that they have been treated unfairly.

I want to have a say in these changes – who do I contact?

The Government will now carry out an 8 week consultation on the scheme so the detailed arrangements can be finalised in time for allocations to be made to learning providers for the 2011/12 academic year. The e-consultation is available at www.education.gov.uk/consultations.