



# Bursary Policy

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## Introduction

The 16-19 Bursary has been set up by the government to support the most vulnerable young people to participate and benefit from post-16 education and training.

Liberty Training receives allocations of bursary funds from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to support eligible learners to meet the costs of participating in education. The College sets its criteria for funding in accordance with the guidelines provided by the ESFA.

Eligible learners will be required to show supporting evidence that they meet the required criteria. In certain exceptional circumstances, Liberty Training may exercise its ability to make discretionary awards.

This policy sets out arrangements for how Liberty Training will operate the 16-19, 19+ Discretionary and Vulnerable Bursary Fund which is based on the Education and Skills Funding Agency's (ESFA) guidance.

## What is the 16-19 Bursary Fund?

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help learners overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

It could help with any education-related costs that may arise during your time at Liberty Training, including essentials like a meal during the day or transport to college or work experience. You may need extra help to buy equipment for your course, or to pay for educational visits.

There are two types of 16-19 bursaries:

- a vulnerable bursary of up to £1200 per year for learners in the defined vulnerable groups
- a discretionary bursary which is awarded to meet individual needs to help with transport costs, meals and equipment. There is no set amount for this bursary, but this bursary will be shared between all eligible learners.

To be eligible for either type of bursary, learners must:

- be aged over 16 and under 19 at 31 August 2022
- learners aged over 19 are only eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16-18 or have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

## Vulnerable Bursary

Learners who meet one of the four criteria listed below and who have a financial need can apply for the vulnerable bursary.

The defined vulnerable groups are learners who are:

- in or have recently left local authority care
- receiving Income Support or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves
- receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in their own name and either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit
- receiving Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in their own name and either ESA or Universal Credit

If you are applying for this level of support, you will need to provide evidence which can be uploaded through the online bursary application.

For learners who are in care or learners who are care leavers, please provide written confirmation of your current or previous looked after status from the relevant local authority. This will also need to be uploaded to the bursary application.

Learners who are entitled to a Vulnerable Bursary may be entitled to receive money to cover the cost of lunch and travel to and from Liberty Training or a work experience placement. When approved, this money will be paid weekly. Payments will be sent by BACS to your Bank Account. Funding may be withdrawn for learners who fail to attend regularly or fail to adhere to our behaviour policy.

Learners in receipt of Income Support or Universal Credit must provide a copy of their Income Support or Universal Credit award notice. It must state clearly that the claim is in the learner's name and confirm they are entitled to benefits in their own right.

The evidence must not state any conditions that prevent them from participating in further education. For learners in receipt of Universal Credit who are financially supporting themselves or someone living with them, please provide supporting documentation such as child benefit, child's birth certificate for children the learner is supporting or where relevant, a tenancy agreement and utility bills in the learners' name.

Reminder to parents: if the learners claim for ESA is successful you can no longer receive certain household benefits for that child such as Child Benefit.

It may be assessed that although a young person may be eligible for a bursary because they are in one or more of the defined groups above, that they do not have any actual financial need and so do not need support from the scheme.

## Foster Care

A young person placed in foster care by the Local Authority, including where the foster carer is on the books of an independent fostering agency, is classed as a looked after child and therefore eligible for help from the vulnerable bursary.

A child who is privately fostered, where a private arrangement is made between the child and the person who will care for the child is not classed as a looked after child and is not eligible for the vulnerable bursary but may submit an application for the discretionary bursary.

## The Discretionary Bursary

We welcome applications for the Discretionary Bursary award from learners who fit into the following criteria:

- Learners aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuers) or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- The learner has a low household income (£24,000 and below)

The Discretionary Bursary Award is to help learners with meals, transport costs, equipment, and curriculum trips. Decisions for the discretionary bursary award are based on each learner's individual circumstances and actual financial need.

Receiving bursary funding does not affect receipt of other means-tested benefits paid to families, such as Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, Child Benefit, Working Tax Credit and Housing Benefit.

We would require evidence of low household income i.e. benefits evidence, P60, payslips.

## Availability of Funding

The college will help as many learners as possible with the funding available but will prioritise those in most need. We are uncertain of the number of applicants that we will receive at the beginning of term 1 and therefore cannot guarantee financial assistance in every case, but welcome applications. We aim to have all decisions made regarding bursary applications by the first half term (October Half Term).

Appeals against unsuccessful applications can be made to the college in writing, or by e-mail to Nikki Hill, Finance Director at [nikki@libertygrouppltd.co.uk](mailto:nikki@libertygrouppltd.co.uk). All appeals will be responded to within 28 days by the Finance Director.

## Who can apply?

To apply for a bursary, you must be aged between 16 and under 19 and in full-time or part-time further education or training or be a 19 + continuer or be aged 19 and have an EHCP.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### How do I apply?

To apply for a bursary, you will need to fill in the online form, via a link that you will be sent to the email address given in your application form. Or you can phone Liberty Training and ask for the link to be sent to you or email [nikki@libertygrouppltd.co.uk](mailto:nikki@libertygrouppltd.co.uk).

We accept bursary applications throughout the academic year as we understand that households can experience a change in circumstances at any time. You must inform us of these changes if you are receiving any help from one of the above bursaries.

### Where do I send my application?

The bursary application is an online application. Once the application is completed, it is sent directly to the Finance and Admin team.

If you have any questions, please email [nikki@libertygrouppltd.co.uk](mailto:nikki@libertygrouppltd.co.uk)

### What do I include?

You will be asked to take photos of supporting documents and upload them via the online application.

You may need any of the following documents:

- your current P60
- SA302 and dividends if self-employed. Your accountant will be able to request an SA302 for you, or you can call HMRC yourself. You will need your basic personal information, your ten-digit UTR (unique tax reference) and NI Number.
- income from savings, shares, investments, trusts, dividends
- income from rental properties
- pension income
- pension credit
- complete and current working and child tax credit document for the past year (annual review document is not sufficient)
- all documentation for Universal Credit (last three months)
- all documentation for ESA
- all documentation for Income Support
- all documentation for Job Seekers Allowance
- all documentation for carers allowance
- all documentation for DLA/PIP
- all documentation for housing benefit and council tax benefit
- any other household income you may be in receipt of.
- current Council Tax bill.

Your application will not move to the next step, until you have uploaded the relevant evidence.

### **When do I send it?**

Return your online application and all required documents to Liberty Training as soon as possible.

A delay in submitting the application form will delay any payments that are due to you.

Applications received during September may not be acknowledged due to the pressures of enrolment.

Bursary back payments will not be made. Payments will commence from the date the complete application with all documentation is received. Where possible we will request outstanding documentation once by e-mail. No further action will be taken until all outstanding documents are received.

### **I got a bursary last year, do I need to re-apply?**

Yes. You must apply for each academic year. Please fill in a new online application form and submit it with all the appropriate documentation.

### **I am studying part-time. Can I apply?**

Yes, you can apply. Colleges can consider applications from part-time learners.

### **How will my bursary be paid?**

You, the learner, must have a bank account in your own name. Payments can only be made to your bank account and will be paid by BACS.

In exceptional circumstances a cash payment may be made. Liberty may also make payments in kind which means instead of receiving money you could get a transport pass, meals or equipment for your course, or we will pay for your enrichment activities for you. You might receive part of your bursary in kind and part in money.

If you are refunded for travel (bus or train ticket), this can be made in cash, on the days you are at college. You will need to take a photo of your ticket and upload this to your bursary account. This will then be processed for payment, by the Finance and Admin team.

Payments will not be made until Liberty Training has seen and verified the appropriate evidence that the learner is eligible to receive a bursary award.

### **Can college tell me what to spend my bursary on?**

Yes, your bursary is to help pay for things you really need to stay on at college. We can insist that your bursary is spent on travel costs, meals during the day or equipment for your courses. In certain circumstances the money awarded can be recovered from the learner if it has not been used for the reasons it was awarded.

**Can I have help with the cost of trips or equipment?**

Dependant on the number of successful applications and monies available we would like to be able to help learners with some of the cost of college trips and equipment necessary for your course.

**Can college stop my bursary payments?**

Yes. You will be asked to sign a bursary contract which is in the bursary online application. The contract details the conditions under which your bursary will be paid.

**Will I still receive my bursary if I can't attend College?**

Your bursary is only used to help with your costs at college or work experience or for travel to and from college/work experience. Therefore, if you do not attend, you will not receive your bursary.