

**Policy:**  
**Learner Support Funds**

Date approved:	July 2018	Review Date:	<b>July 2019</b>
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## **Introduction**

Stockton Riverside College receives allocations of funds from Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to support eligible students who are experiencing financial disadvantage which causes barriers to education.

The ESFA publish guidelines which sets out the criteria for how the Learner Support Funds (LSF) can be used and specific requirements for monitoring the appropriate use of the funds.

Stockton Riverside College is committed to supporting students and within this policy it will outline how to apply for financial support, evidence requirements and how the funds will be allocated. The College reserves the right to amend / cease support detailed in this policy due to changes to the funding received or changes in the requirements from the ESFA.

Students who may be eligible for support may not automatically receive it, as limited funds are available and can be exhausted. In light of this, the College ask students to consider any commitments made by the students which will affect their financial situation before confirmation of award from Student Bursary Support Team is received.

## **Assessing Eligibility**

Within the ESFA guidance, clear criteria is set which identifies those who are eligible to apply for support.

The College application form is available on the website, can be collected from Student Services or mailed out on request from the Student Bursary Support Team. Assistance with completing the application is available from Student Services.

Students are requested to provide evidence of their household income as part of their application to ensure they receive their LSF award. This evidence will be reviewed by the Student Bursary Support Team when assessing applications, which is a requirement from ESFA.

Evidence required is outlined in the Student Bursary Support Application Form and specific evidence is stated in this policy. Evidence required includes proof of benefits or proof of low income which should be an April 17-18 Tax Credit Award Notice and/or P60 or evidence of self-employment income. Bank statements will NOT be accepted as evidence as stated in ESFA guidance.

To ensure applications are assessed in a timely manner it is important that evidence is provided at time of application or given to Student Bursary Team as soon as possible.

## **Eligibility**

All students aged 16 and over and meet the residency criteria set by the ESFA and are studying on an ESFA funded course are eligible to apply for support.

Students who are studying on an apprenticeship programme are excluded from applying for support via the Learner Support Funds:

## **Support for students aged 16 to 18 years old**

### **Free Travel to College**

Stockton Riverside College provides free bus travel to and from college on week days, during term time or travel allowance which will not exceed £2.50 per day. The travel is provided from your home address and the student must be over 1 mile from their college campus. This offer is available to all 16-18 year old college students, who are studying at Stockton Riverside College, regardless of household income.

### **Travelling to College**

Stockton Riverside College provide students with a smart card bus pass which allows travel on either a Stagecoach OR Arriva bus from their home to the college site. It is the student's responsibility to keep this pass throughout the year, if card are lost or misplaced the students must apply to the bus company for a replacement which will include a small fee.

At SRC Bede College students are provided with a dedicated bus which services many local areas and further details of these routes can be found on the College website. For SRC Bede students this dedicated bus will provide them with free travel to and from college at set times and students from this campus will be directed to these buses as a precedence.

If there is not a Stagecoach, Arriva or dedicated bus route near their home, they can use another public transport service and the College may reimburse some of the cost, based on the following criteria:

- Travel claims for college to be claimed by completing a Travel Form, which is available from Student Services.
- Evidence of receipts, are presented to Student Bursary Support alongside the Travel Form.

### **Meals Allowance**

Students aged 16-18 (or up to 25 years old for students with an Education, Health and Care Plan) on or before 31<sup>st</sup> August, are eligible for free meals, if their parent or guardian qualifies for one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs)
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 pa

Free meals award allows the students to purchase a set meal from our college canteens and cannot be transferred into a cash value.

## Support with Course Equipment / Uniform

The LSF allow students to apply for financial support with purchasing course related equipment and uniform. Student Bursary applications will be assessed in conjunction with information supplied direct from delivery teams regarding course related costs.

Household Income	£0.00 - £16,190	£16,191 - £21,000	£21,001 - £25,000	£25,001 +
Uniform (where appropriate)	Up to £20 towards	Up to £20 towards	Up to £20 towards	
Course related Equipment	65% towards the cost	65% towards the cost	65% towards the cost	

## Childcare

Students aged 20 year old and under at the start of their course may be entitled to support from the Care to Learn Scheme provided by the Government. Further information on this scheme can found on Government website: [www.gov.uk/care-to-learn](http://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn) .

## Vulnerable Bursary – Students in Care/Care Leavers or defined vulnerable groups

Students aged 16 to 18 years old, who meet the criteria shown below, are eligible for the Vulnerable Bursary Scheme.

Students MUST be enrolled on to a course that is funded by the EFA AND fall within ONE of the following categories:

- In care
- A care leaver
- In receipt of Income Support, or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner
- Receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right as well as Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right

In addition, Students must have an attendance record of **90%** or greater and a satisfactory behaviour and be up-to-date with all course work/assignments.

The maximum bursary is £1,200 (pro-rated for courses lasting less than 30 weeks) in value. Students receiving the funds will be supported with free travel, free meals, cost towards course equipment which will be deducted from their bursary and then given a weekly cash bursary from the remainder. A student receiving support under the Vulnerable Bursary Scheme will not be eligible to receive support from any other bursary scheme operated within the College.

## **Support for students aged over 19 years old**

### **Support Travelling to College**

Stockton Riverside College provides free bus travel to and from college on week days, during term time or travel allowance which will not exceed £2.50 per day, for those students who meet the required household income threshold and live over 2 miles from their college campus. For income thresholds please see table below.

Stockton Riverside College provide students with a smart card bus pass which allows travel on either a Stagecoach OR Arriva bus from their home to the college site. It is the student's responsibility to keep this pass throughout the year, if card are lost or misplaced the students must apply to the bus company for a replacement which will include a small fee.

If there is not a Stagecoach, Arriva or dedicated bus route near their home, they can use another public transport service and the College may reimburse some of the cost, based on the following criteria:

- Travel claims for college to be claimed by completing a Travel Form, which is available from Student Services.
- Evidence of receipts, are presented to Student Bursary Team alongside the Travel Form.

### **Meals Allowance**

Students over 19 years old, meet the income threshold and are receipt of an eligible benefit, or financially dependent on a parent or guardian who is in receipt of an eligible benefit they may be entitled to meals while attending the College. Qualifying benefits include one of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs)
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 pa

Free meals allowance allows the students to purchase a set meal from our college canteens and cannot be transferred into a cash value.

### **Support with Course Equipment / Uniform**

The LSF allow students to apply for financial support with purchasing course related equipment and uniform. Student Bursary applications will be assessed in conjunction with information supplied direct from delivery teams regarding course related costs.

### **Childcare**

Students aged 20 years and above, on or before 31<sup>st</sup> August, may be eligible for support with childcare costs up to £32 per day, in line with Care to Learn, the Government scheme. The childcare provider must be registered with Ofsted and complete a childcare form before the support can commence. The contract the student has for childcare is with the childcare provider and NOT with the College.

Please Note that the student is responsible for childcare fees which have not been agreed by The Stockton Riverside College Student Bursary Support Team.

Household income	£0.00 - £16,190	£16,191 - £21,000	£21,001 - £25,000	£25,001 - £30,000
Free travel	Free travel with Stagecoach OR Arriva.  Where there are no Stagecoach or Arriva services up to £12.50 towards alternative bus or train travel.	Free travel with Stagecoach OR Arriva.  Where there are no Stagecoach or Arriva services up to £12.50 towards alternative bus or train travel.	Free travel with Stagecoach OR Arriva.  Where there are no Stagecoach or Arriva services up to £12.50 towards alternative bus or train travel.	
Childcare	Up to 100% / £32 per day of childcare costs paid for timetabled and attended college days.	Up to 100% / £32 per day of childcare costs paid for timetabled and attended college days.	Up to 100% / £32 per day of childcare costs paid for timetabled and attended college days.	Up to 50% / £16 per day of childcare costs paid for timetabled and attended college days.
Course related equipment	65% towards the cost	65% towards the cost	65% towards the cost	
Uniform	Up to £20 towards	Up to £20 towards		
Free meal	A meal for each timetabled day at college (must be in receipt certain benefits)	A meal for each timetabled day at college (must be in receipt certain benefits)		

## Support for students who are receiving the Advanced Learner Loan

Students who have been approved for the Advanced Learner Loan from the Student Loans Company could be entitled to support with course equipment, uniform and childcare. For these students it is imperative that the loan is agreed and in place, to enable access these funds.

### Support with Course Equipment / Uniform

Students with the loan in place can apply for financial support with purchasing course related equipment and uniform. Student Bursary applications will be assessed in conjunction with information supplied direct from delivery teams regarding course related costs.

### Childcare

Students with a loan in place AND aged 20 years and above, on or before 31<sup>st</sup> August, may be eligible for support with childcare costs up to £32 per day, in line with Care to Learn, the Government scheme. The childcare provider must be registered with Ofsted and complete a childcare form before the support can commence. The contract the student has for childcare is with the childcare provider and NOT with the College. Please note – If the Advanced Learning Loan is not approved, childcare cannot be paid for by the college, any childcare costs must be met by the student. It is the Students responsibility to contact Student Finance England to have their loan approved.

	Household Income £0.00 - £16,190	Household Income £16,191 - £21,000	Household Income £21,001 - £25,000	Household Income £25,001 - £30,000
Childcare	Up to 100% / £32 per day of childcare costs paid for timetabled and attended college days.	Up to 100% / £32 per day of childcare costs paid for timetabled and attended college days.	Up to 100% / £32 per day of childcare costs paid for timetabled and attended college days.	Up to 50% / £16 per day of childcare costs paid for timetabled and attended college days.
Uniform	Up to £20 towards course uniform where appropriate	Up to £20 towards course uniform where appropriate	Up to £20 towards course uniform where appropriate	
Essential Personal Protective Equipment	65% towards the cost of essential equipment.	65% towards the cost of essential equipment.	65% towards the cost of essential equipment.	

## Payment Schedule

Where payments are made, these will be made by BACS transfer into a student's nominated bank account. These payments will be made on specified dates providing the students provides Student Bursary Team with bank details and where claim forms are required they meet the agreed dates. Please see Payment Schedule Information for further details.

## Audit/governance

Administration and allocation of funds will be subject to Stockton Riverside College's normal governance and audit regimes. Audit guidance is available on the Department for Education website. The College will keep records as evidence as required by the ESFA, for audit purposes. Examples include:

- Copies of income evidence to assess award
- Letters confirming a student's vulnerable status
- Invoices received from childcare providers for childcare costs

## Appeals

Students are advised, in writing, of the College's decision and of the reasons if they are not successful in their application. An appeals procedure is in place for students who are unhappy with a financial support application decision. In the event of an appeal, students are requested to email [studentfinance@stockton.ac.uk](mailto:studentfinance@stockton.ac.uk) with new information and evidence and this will be reviewed by the Student Bursary Support Team.

If this this initial decision is upheld the student can ask for the appeal to be heard at a higher. Appeals should be in writing, along with supporting evidence, sent to the Student Services Manager. A panel will then be held and students will be informed of the decision within 10 working days. In some cases students may be contacted or invited in prior to the meeting to discuss the appeal.

## Using Your Personal Data

We will gather specific personal information about you (the student) and where appropriate, parents and carers. We will not use the data provided for any other purpose other than to make a decision about your eligibility for financial support and then to notify you about the decision. Stockton Riverside College is funded by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). If required through audit, we will allow the ESFA to see the information you have provided us. This data provided will be retained for the year that you enrol + 6 years.

## Payment Schedule

Any cash payments for travel claims or the Vulnerable Bursary are made using the dates on page 9. Attendance must be 90% or above between the dates shown to receive the payment on the date in the payment column. Princes Trust courses have additional payment dates shown below.

Week Number	Attendance Date From	Attendance Date To	Payment Date
Princes Trust Week 7a	29/10/2018	02/11/2018	09/11/2018
Princes Trust Week 20a	18/03/2019	22/03/2019	29/03/2019
Princes Trust Week 26a	08/04/2019	12/04/2019	19/04/2019
Princes Trust Week 26b	15/04/2019	19/04/2019	26/04/2019
Princes Trust Week 31a	27/05/2019	31/05/2019	07/06/2019

<b>Week Number</b>	<b>Attendance Date From</b>	<b>Attendance Date To</b>	<b>Payment Date</b>
Week 1	10/09/2018	14/09/2018	21/09/2018
Week 2	17/09/2018	21/09/2018	28/09/2018
Week 3	24/09/2018	28/09/2018	05/10/2018
Week 4	01/10/2018	05/10/2018	12/10/2018
Week 5	08/10/2018	12/10/2018	19/10/2018
Week 6	15/10/2018	19/10/2018	26/10/2018
Week 7	22/10/2018	26/10/2018	02/11/2018
Week 8	05/11/2018	09/11/2018	16/11/2018
Week 9	12/11/2018	16/11/2018	23/11/2018
Week 10	19/11/2018	23/11/2018	30/11/2018
Week 11	26/11/2018	30/11/2018	07/12/2018
Week 12	03/12/2018	07/12/2018	14/12/2018
Week 13	10/12/2018	14/12/2018	21/12/2018
Week 14	17/12/2018	21/12/2018	11/01/2019
Week 15	07/01/2019	07/01/2019	18/01/2019
Week 16	14/01/2019	18/01/2019	25/01/2019
Week 17	21/01/2019	25/01/2019	01/02/2019
Week 18	28/01/2019	01/02/2019	08/02/2019
Week 19	04/02/2019	08/02/2019	15/02/2019
Week 20	11/02/2019	15/02/2019	22/02/2019
Week 21	25/02/2019	01/03/2019	08/03/2019
Week 22	04/03/2019	08/03/2019	15/03/2019
Week 23	11/03/2019	15/03/2019	22/03/2019
Week 24	18/03/2019	22/03/2019	29/03/2019
Week 25	25/03/2019	29/03/2019	05/04/2019
Week 26	01/04/2019	05/04/2019	12/04/2019
Week 27	22/04/2019	26/04/2019	03/05/2019
Week 28	29/04/2019	03/05/2019	10/05/2019
Week 29	06/05/2019	10/05/2019	17/05/2019
Week 30	13/05/2019	17/05/2019	24/05/2019
Week 31	20/05/2019	24/05/2019	31/05/2019
Week 32	03/06/2019	07/06/2019	14/06/2019
Week 33	10/06/2019	14/06/2019	21/06/2019
Week 34	17/06/2019	21/06/2019	28/06/2019
Week 35	24/06/2019	28/06/2019	05/07/2019
Week 36	01/07/2019	05/07/2019	12/07/2019
Week 37	08/07/2019	12/07/2019	19/07/2019
Week 38	15/07/2019	19/07/2019	26/07/2019