

Key College Study Programme Bursary Policy

Approved by	Training and Education Committee	
Review date		
Review by	Julia Hodder Head of Training and Education	

1. 16 to 19 Bursary Fund summary

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

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- a vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups
- discretionary bursaries which can be awarded to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment

YMCA Key College is responsible for managing both types of bursary within the context of its ESFA contract. Students who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should make an application through the relevant centre, i.e. Chesterfield, Ilkeston, Marble Hall or Osmaston Rd.

1.1. Eligibility criteria: all bursaries

1.1.1. Age

To be eligible to receive a bursary in an academic year the student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 at the 31st August that falls in that academic year.

Students aged 19 or over are **NOT** eligible for the *vulnerable groups* bursary.

Students aged 19 or over are, however, eligible to receive a discretionary bursary if they have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or are on a course they started when they were under 19.

1.1.2. Residency

Students must meet the residency criteria in the ESFA funding regulations for post-16 provision in the academic year. (This document also specifies the evidence YMCA Key College must see and retain for audit to confirm eligibility for study on ESFA-funded provision in the UK.)

1.1.3. Eligible education provision

Per ESFA guidance, to be eligible for the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund students must be participating in provision that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (for example Ofsted) and the provision must also be funded directly by ESFA or by ESFA via a local authority, or funded or co-financed by the European Social Fund, or otherwise publicly funded and lead to a qualification (up to and including level 3) accredited by Ofqual, or be pursuant to Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 or be a 16 to 19 traineeship.

1.1.4. Specific groups of students: eligibility questions

1.1.4.1. Students aged under 16

YMCA Key College should generally only pay bursaries to students aged 16 or over. However, in exceptional circumstances YMCA Key College may use its discretion to pay bursaries to younger students, for example, where a student is following an accelerated study programme. Exceptional circumstances do not include students aged 14 to 16 who are attending college as part of their key stage 4 programme.

1.1.4.2. Young offenders

Young offenders can apply for a bursary if they are serving a non-custodial sentence (but not if they are serving a custodial sentence), or have been released early from a custodial sentence (but not if released on temporary license) or have been remanded to a non-secure institution (but not if they have been remanded to a secure institution).

YMCA Key College should provide in-kind support to young offenders rather than cash wherever possible.

1.1.4.3. Accompanied asylum seeking children (under 18 with an adult relative or partner)

As long as an asylum seeker has not had their application for asylum refused, YMCA Key College can provide *in-kind* student support such as books, equipment or a travel pass. Under no circumstances can YMCA Key College give cash to any asylum seeker unless they are an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child.

1.1.4.4. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children are looked after children and are eligible for a vulnerable bursary because they are in care.

When these young people reach legal adulthood at age 18, YMCA Key College must consider their immigration status. If the asylum claim is decided in their favour, then they are *care leavers* and as such, they continue to be eligible for a vulnerable bursary until they reach 19th birthday. If an asylum claim is not supported and appeal rights exhausted, an individual has no entitlement to public funds.

2. Discretionary bursaries

YMCA Key College receives discretionary bursary funding allocations from the ESFA that are managed directly by YMCA Key College. YMCA Key College decides which students are eligible for help and what help they receive, in line with ESFA guidance and YMCA Key College's own policies and procedures.

To be eligible for the discretionary bursary, students must be facing financial barriers to participation and need help to stay in education. YMCA Key College can make discretionary bursary awards to students to help them overcome the individual barriers to participation they face, for example help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment.

YMCA Key College will decide which students receive a discretionary bursary and how much they receive, depending on each student's circumstances. YMCA Key College Training and Education Managers must not make blanket or flat rate payments to all students.

Learners from households where the *original gross* income of the *household* is more than £35,000 will not normally receive support through the discretionary bursary, but YMCA Key College may pay discretionary bursary to such a learner under exceptional circumstances.

3. Vulnerable bursaries

To be eligible for the vulnerable bursary, students must be in one of the defined vulnerable groups:

- in care
- care leavers
- in receipt of Income Support, or Universal Credit *because they are financially supporting themselves or 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 and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right

Students who are in one or more of the groups above can apply for a vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 (if they are participating on a study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more - YMCA Key College will pay a pro-rata amount for students on study programmes of less than 30 weeks per the basis outlined in the published [guidance from the ESFA](#)).

For vulnerable bursaries, YMCA Key College draws down funding (by submitting a funding claim) from the Student Bursary Support Service (SBSS) when students who meet the vulnerable bursary criteria have been identified. We are responsible for assessing if students are eligible to receive a vulnerable bursary payment and for retaining evidence to support the decision. We are required to submit a funding claim form to the SBSS to draw down vulnerable student bursary funds once eligibility is confirmed. We can submit as many funding claims as we need to during the year. Per best practice, YMCA Key College will not hold onto claims until the end of the academic year but will submit regularly.

The vulnerable bursary can be paid for each academic year the student is in education or training, as long as they continue to meet the scheme eligibility criteria.

YMCA Key College can pay a vulnerable student more than £1,200 if we assess they need extra help to remain in education. Any payments over the £1,200 must be paid from our discretionary bursary allocation or from YMCA Key College's own funds.

Equally, YMCA Key College may decide that although a young person may be eligible for a vulnerable bursary because they are in one or more of the defined vulnerable groups, they do not have any actual financial need and so are not eligible on that basis. For example, their financial needs are already met and/or they have no relevant costs.

3.1. Defining in care and care leavers

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund defines 'in care' as:

- children looked after by a local authority on a voluntary basis (section 20 of the Children Act 1989) or under a care order (section 31 of the Children Act 1989) - Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 defines the term 'looked after child'

A 'care leaver' is defined as:

- a young person aged 16 and 17 who was previously looked after for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16; or
- a young person aged 18 or above who was looked after prior to becoming 18 for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods of 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16

In legal terms these children are called 'relevant children' or 'former relevant children'.

3.2. Foster care, including privately arranged foster care

A young person placed with a foster carer by the local authority, including where the foster carer is on the books of an independent fostering agency, is classed as looked after. They are in a defined vulnerable group ('in care') and eligible for help from the vulnerable bursary.

A child who is privately fostered (in other words, a private arrangement is made between the parent 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.

In some instances a young person may have been in the care of the local authority and the care transferred to another party via a permanent form of fostering such as a Special Guardianship Order. In these circumstances the young person is defined as having left care so is now a care leaver. They are in a defined vulnerable group ('care leaver') and eligible for help from the vulnerable bursary.

3.3. Identifying vulnerable students

YMCA Key College is responsible for identifying students in the defined vulnerable groups.

Centres should be aware that students who are in care or are care leavers might be reluctant to say so because of fear of being stigmatised and should ensure confidentiality to reduce these concerns. For example, Training and Education staff should tell students how their information will be used and shared and should not put students in a position where they are publicly identified as receiving a vulnerable bursary.

YMCA Key College can take the initiative to identify students eligible for the vulnerable bursary by working with the local authority's looked-after children's education services and care leaver services to help and encourage students to apply for a bursary. Local data sharing agreements can be set up to share information about which students might be eligible and who should be supported to make an application. For example, YMCA Key College might ask the local authority if a young person received free school meals in year 11.

3.4. Evidence of eligibility

YMCA Key College must obtain proof that students are eligible for a vulnerable bursary. Centre staff should ask for evidence from each student and retain copies for audit purposes. For example:

- for students who are in care or a care leaver, written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority - this is the local authority that looks after them or provides their leaving care services. The evidence could be a letter or an email but must be clearly from the local authority
- for students in receipt of Income Support, a copy of their Income Support award notice. They must be entitled to the benefit in their own right and the evidence must not specify any conditions that prevent the young person from being in further education or training (some young people in receipt of benefits are not allowed to participate)
- for students in receipt of Universal Credit, a copy of their Universal Credit Award notice. They must be entitled to the benefit in their own right. They must also

provide additional documentation to confirm their independent status, for example a tenancy agreement in the student's name, a child benefit receipt, children's birth certificates, utility bills etc

- for students receiving Universal Credit/Employment and Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payments, a copy of the student's Universal Credit or ESA award from DWP (UC claimants will be able to print off details of their award from their journal). Evidence of receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment, must also be provided

3.5.Young people in the defined vulnerable groups who don't require bursary funding

In some cases a young person might be eligible for a vulnerable bursary because they are in one or more of the defined vulnerable groups, but their financial needs are already met and/or they have no relevant costs.

For example a student in local authority care whose educational costs are covered in full by the local authority

If the student still wants to claim a vulnerable student bursary, YMCA Key College will consider the particular circumstances in each case and assess whether no bursary should be awarded (because the student has no financial needs) or to award a reduced amount of bursary (because the financial help needed is limited).

In these instances, YMCA Key College will clearly explain to all parties the aim of bursary funding and why no bursary is being awarded or why a reduced bursary is being paid.

YMCA Key College will state in the application form that there is possibility of no award, or a limited award, of the vulnerable bursary being the outcome of an application. This ensures all parties are clear that meeting the vulnerable bursary criteria does not automatically mean funding will be given.