

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

1 November 2012



16-19 BURSARY FUND OVERVIEW

In March 2011, the Government announced a new £180 million bursary scheme to help the most vulnerable 16 to 19 year olds continue in full time education. The 16-19 Bursary Fund replaced the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and Discretionary Learner Support Fund (dLSF) schemes which previously provided financial support to encourage 16-19 year olds to remain in learning beyond the compulsory leaving age. The funding can be used for essential costs such as:

- meals during the day,
- transport to school, college or training provider,
- extra help to buy additional books, clothing or equipment for your course,
- educational visits

The 16-19 Bursary Fund is managed by the Education Funding Agency (EFA), an executive agency in the Department of Employment. The EFA provides non-statutory guidance, setting out the Secretary of State's arrangements under section 14 of the Education Act 2002. The funding is allocated within schools and FE colleges' 16-19 budgets.

The national arrangements identify two groups of young people for support:

- **Guaranteed Bursaries:** Those most in need will be eligible for a bursary of £1,200 a year. This includes young people in care, care leavers, young people receiving income support, and disabled young people receiving both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance.
- **Discretionary Bursaries:** Other students who need financial support to help them to stay in education or training may also be able to claim a bursary to help with costs.

BURSARIES IN PLYMOUTH

In response to the Government's changes to the EMA scheme and some other learner support funds; Plymouth schools and academies alongside Plymouth City Council have designed a collaborative arrangement known as the Plymouth Schools and Academies Bursary Scheme (PSAAB). The bursary allocations from the Education Funding Agency are transferred into a central pot which the LA controls and distributes.

The collaborative approach allows the scheme to support the poverty agenda by providing support for those young people in in households with the lowest financial resource regardless of their choice of school.

The following Schools are participating in the Plymouth Schools and Academies Bursary Scheme:

All Saints Academy Plymouth, Devonport High School for Boys, Devonport High School for Girls, Eggbuckland Community College, Hele's School, Lipson Community College, Marine Academy Plymouth, Notre Dame RC School, Ridgeway School, Plymouth High School for Girls, Plymstock School, Sir John Hunt CSC, Stoke Damerel Community College, St Boniface College, Tor Bridge High, Millford School, PACLS/YMCA.

Coombe Dean School chose not to participate in the collaborative scheme but will be running a similar scheme of its own. Plymouth College of Art and City College Plymouth will also be running their own Bursary schemes.

LOCAL CRITERIA AND PAYMENTS

Category 1: £1200 bursary – given over ten monthly payments. Students aged at least 16 and under 19 years of age on 31/08/11 who are in care or receipt of Income Support or are in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance.

Category 2: £750 bursary – given over ten monthly payments. Students aged at least 16 and under 19 years of age on 31/08/11 who are receiving Free School Meals.

Category 3: £500 bursary – given over three payments – Jan, Mar and July. Students aged at least 16 and under 19 years of age on 31/08/11 who have household income of less than £21K or receiving DLA.

There is also a small pot of money for exceptional cases where the learner does not fit in any of the categories above but are facing financial hardship in relation to their studies. The amount given to this bursary award is up to £100 but is a one off payment.

APPLICATION AND PAYMENTS PROCESSES

Learners apply themselves by filling in an application form and the School then authorises this and sends the application in to the LA to process and make the payments. The bursaries are awarded for an academic year.

In the first year (2011/12) the numbers of awards made were as follows:

Cat 1 – 43, Cat 2 – 228, Cat 3 – 172, Exceptional cases – 34, **Total 477**

This year, to date, we have received the following number of applications:

Cat 1 – 42, Cat 2 – 347, Cat 3 – 242, **Total 631**

Schools are allowed to reduce payments if learners are not attending or completing work to required levels. Each month schools return a schedule to the LA to confirm learners attendance and behaviour. The LA then process the payments to go direct in to the learner's bank account.

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION ARRANGEMENTS

The EFA allows bursary scheme providers to retain 5% of their allocation to support administrative costs; this is divided 3% to the LA and 2% to schools.

A steering group meets each half-term to review the running of the scheme. The group comprises representatives from schools and the LA. It ensures delivery of the scheme meets the original intentions of the schools/LA and provides the greatest support to the learners/families with greatest financial need. It also makes recommendations for improvements such as:

- Increasing the frequency of payments to category 3 learners
- Speeding up applications processes to allow earlier payments to learners

The steering group provides a forum for discussing issues that arise during the year and to plan changes to arrangements for future years.

Author:	John Bale
Job Title:	Leadership Adviser
Department:	Education, Learning and Family Support Department
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