FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS AGED 16-19 STUDYING IN DUDLEY BOROUGH COLLEGES

16-19 Bursaries

On 28 March 2011 the Government announced a new 16-19 Bursary Fund to support the most vulnerable young people to participate in and benefit from post-16 education and training. The new scheme replaces, in part, Educational Maintenance Allowances (EMAs).

The further education, sixth form and tertiary colleges in Dudley Borough are adopting a common approach to the allocation of 16-19 bursaries.

At enrolment, all learners aged 16-19 joining full time programmes will be offered the opportunity to provide information about their financial circumstances and apply for financial support. Colleges will use the information provided to assess the financial support needs of learners.

Learners in nominated vulnerable groups will be eligible for a bursary of £1,200 per academic year. The nominated vulnerable groups are:

- Young people in care.

- Care leavers.

- Young people in receipt of income support.

- Disabled young people in receipt of Employment Support Allowance who are also in receipt of Disability Living Allowance.

Detailed guidance on how this bursary is operated in each individual college will be provided by the college itself.

In general, for learners not in the nominated vulnerable groups, colleges will make awards based upon a proven hardship. Colleges will use the eligibility criteria of the former EMA scheme (if your household earns less than £20,817) as one of the indicators in assessing an individual's eligibility for financial support. Hardship must be substantiated by evidence which will be retained in accordance with audit requirements.

Learners meeting the former EMA eligibility criteria may be eligible for **discretionary financial support.** Normally this will be an **'in kind' payment** (rather than a cash payment) which will support learners in attending college. Examples of this support are:

- Support with travel costs to college, which might be through the provision of a free bus pass or access to college operated transport.

- Support with the costs of learning through the provision of specialist equipment.

- Support with day to day living costs through the provision of meal vouchers.

- Support for the costs of trips, visits and residential.

- Support for the costs of examinations and other registrations (such as Criminal Records Bureau checks) as and where required.

- Support with the costs of attending interviews for employment or higher education.

- In exceptional circumstances, the provision of emergency cash to meet an urgent need.

Unfortunately discretionary learning support funds are limited and colleges cannot guarantee providing support for all eligible learners although every effort will be made to ensure financial circumstances do not stop learners attending college.

Detailed guidance on how discretionary financial support is operated in each individual college will be provided by the college itself.

Support for learners who had previously received EMA

The government has also put in place transitional arrangements for learners who have previously been in receipt of EMA. They are as follows:

- Learners who successfully applied for EMA in 2009/10 will continue to be eligible to receive weekly payments at the same rate that they were awarded in 2009/10.

- Learners who successfully applied for the maximum EMA weekly payment of £30 in 2010/11 will continue to be eligible to receive £20 for each week they are in education or training.

- Learners who successfully applied for EMA payments of £10 or £20 in 2010/11 are not eligible to continue to receive any further EMA payments in 2011/12 under the transitional arrangements. These learners may be eligible for discretionary financial support (see above).

The transitional payments (EMA) will continue to be paid by the Learner Support Service (Capita).

If you require further information on financial support, please contact the college you are applying to directly.

Dudley College
www.dudleycol.ac.uk

Halesowen College
www.halesowen.ac.uk

www.kedst.ac.uk

Stourbridge College
www.stourbridge.ac.uk