

## WEA Learner Support Policy

### 1. Purpose

To define learners' entitlements to learner support.

### 2. Values

The WEA believes that all learners should have access to appropriate learner support, and that where support is limited, it should go to those in greatest need. Key values include:

- Impartial information, advice and guidance about what is available
- Equitable distribution of funds in line with criteria set down by funding bodies
- Transparent processes for administering any funds designated for learner support
- A clear Appeals Procedure where funding has been refused
- Referral to other sources of support, either within the WEA or externally where this would result in a better end-result for the learner.

### 3. Scope

"Learner support" refers to financial and practical support for learners "outside the classroom". It is supported by the Disclosure of Disability Policy which aims to ensure that learners receive support within the learning experience. The aim of learner support is to help remove *practical and financial barriers to learning*. The main source of funding is the Learner Support Fund allocated by the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) for transport, childcare, books and equipment, meals and accommodation, etc., although some projects may offer support from other funding bodies such as ESF or the Lottery Fund.

### 4. Policy

The WEA policy is to:

- Ensure that all learners receive information about learner support and its availability in line with the Information, Advice and Guidance Policy
- Give learners, staff and volunteers clear guidelines about eligibility for the Learner Support Fund based on Learning & Skills Council (LSC) criteria
- Provide learners with appropriate opportunities to discuss their learner support needs confidentially and one-to-one
- Ensure confidentiality in the process of application in terms of the Confidentiality Policy
- Manage the Learner Support Fund to ensure that those with the greatest needs are supported in line with LSC criteria
- Ensure fair and equitable administration of the Learner Support Fund in line with LSC criteria
- Train and support staff to administer the Fund fairly as above
- Give learners clear information about the processes of application and appeal
- Give learners clear reasons for refused Learner Support applications
- Suggest or refer learners to other sources of financial support wherever possible
- Ensure that any other sources of support are similarly managed in line with the requirements of their funding bodies.

## 5. Implementation

Implementation is described in "Support for Learners - LSF and ALS Guidance Notes for all Staff" which is on First Class Education Zone/Learner Support/Learner Support Fund Guidance.

The Education Strategy Manager for Learner Support will provide ongoing support via email and telephone for regional staff, especially on eligibility issues. Regional briefings and training events will also be provided on request.

## 6. Management

The ES Manager for Learner Support has overall responsibility for learner support and for administration of the Learner Support Fund in line with LSC criteria

Regional roles and responsibilities are set out in "Support for Learners" described in 5 above. In the case of eligibility issues and appeals, the Education Strategy Manager will consult LSC Funding Guidance or with the LSC. The resulting decision will be final.

## 7. Monitoring

Nationally, the Education Strategy Manager for Learner Support will monitor use of the fund by regions. Reports will be generated monthly from CAM, and the ES Manager will take steps to discuss regional imbalances in spending and reallocate the Fund if necessary.

Regionally, eligibility checking is the responsibility of tutor organisers, supported by the Regional IAG/LS Coordinators and by Regional Management Teams, with support from the ES Manager for Learner Support as described in 5 above.

Regionally, the Fund will be monitored by the LS Coordinator, by administrative staff with a specific remit for Learner Support Fund and by Regional Secretaries.

## 8. Links to other policies and documents

This policy is part of a suite of Learner Support Policies defining learner support entitlements and set out in the Learner Support Strategy (see First Class Education Zone, Learner Support/Quality Improvement.)

Specific relevant links are to:

- Confidentiality Policy
- Information, Advice and Guidance Policy
- Support for Learners - LSF and ALS Guidance Notes for All Staff (see 5)
- Appeals Procedure (in above publication).

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