



Adult Learning Within Reach

WEA Learner Support Policy (Financial Support)

1. Purpose

To define learners' entitlements to financial support.

2. Values

The WEA believes that all learners should have access to appropriate financial support to support course costs and learning difficulties, disabilities or other identified needs. Key values include:

- Prioritising limited funds for those in greatest need
- Transparent processes for administering any funds designated for learner support
- A clear appeals procedure for use where funding has been refused
- Referral to alternative sources of support, either within the WEA or externally where this would result in a better end-result for the learner.

3. Scope & Eligibility

All learners accessing all support fund must be:

- 19 years old on the 31st August
- Fully enrolled on to a WEA course funded by the ESFA or Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) where you live.

The main sources of financial support are:

- Discretionary Learner Support (DLS) allocated directly to WEA to cover transport, childcare, books and equipment, meals and accommodation, etc. for learners experiencing financial hardship. This is funded by the via Adult Education Budget (AEB) or Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCA)
- Additional Learning Support (ALS) helps the WEA work flexibly and provides support activity to meet the learning needs of learners who have an identified learning difficulty or disability, a health issue or other support needs. This is funded by the AEB or via MCA.
- Low wage offer towards free tuition fees for individuals earning a certain salary set by AEB or the individual MCA's.
- For learners aged 19 years old after the 31st August should apply for childcare via Care to Learn which can help with childcare costs while you study.

- Occasional resources or services that may be provided by project funding or via partner organisations, e.g. funded childcare provision, free IAG sessions, free trips.

4. Policy

The WEA policy is to:

Ensure that all learners receive information about financial support and its availability in line with the Learner Support Strategy. This enables learners, staff and volunteers clear guidance about learner eligibility for all types of support. Current information on financial support can be found by visiting <https://www.wea.org.uk/learn-us/course-fees-and-financial-support>

Provide learners with appropriate opportunities to discuss their support needs confidentially and one-to-one.

Ensure confidentiality during application processes in line with the Confidentiality Policy and manage Discretionary Learner Support to ensure that those in greatest need are supported in line with ESFA/MCA rules:

- Ensure fair and fair administration of Discretionary Learner Support in line with ESFA and MCA rules
- Train and support staff to administer the DLS fairly as above
- Give learners clear information about the processes of application and appeal
- Give learners clear reasons for refused Discretionary Learner Support applications in line with the Appeals Procedures for DLS Applications.
- Signpost or refer refused s 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

- Up to date information can be accessed on the [WEA website](#)
- Training offered to tutors and WEA staff via learning and development opportunities by the Learner Support and Progression Team.

6. Management

- The Learner Support and Progression Team Leader has responsibility for learner support and for administration of Discretionary Learner Support and Additional Learner Support in line with ESFA and MCA rules.

- The Learner Support Team to process DLS and ALS forms within five working days (longer in enrolment periods) and record this in our MIS.
- Course Managers and tutors will promote and manage learner support working closely with the Learner Support and Progression Team Leader
- Where there are DLS or ALS eligibility issues and appeals, the Head of Learner Attraction and Experience will consult ESFA and MCA Funding Rules. The resulting decision will normally be final. See Appeals Procedure for DLS Applications for appeals beyond the WEA.

7. Monitoring

Nationally:

The Learner Support and Progression Team Leader will monitor use of Discretionary Learner Support and Additional Learner Support Needs. Reports will be generated monthly from DLS/ ALS Trackers to inform spending and reallocate the funds if necessary.

8. Links to other policies and documents

This policy is part of a suite of Learner Support policies defining learner support entitlements. Most relevant policies are publicly available through the WEA's website at <https://www.wea.org.uk/about-us/policies>

Date of this Review	Date of next Review	Policy reviewed and updated by:	Policy approved by:
January 2025	July 2025	Head of Learner Attraction and Experience	Director for Learning