

THE LEARNER HARDSHIP FUND - COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

If you have any queries when completing the form please do not hesitate to contact the Learner Support team in Northampton 01604 734244 or in Daventry 01604 736324.

- Complete the form in **CAPITAL LETTERS** and using a pen.
- Attach evidence where it is requested.

Section 1 - Information about you

Please complete all of this section. We need this information to track your application through the process. If you have not received your college ID number (normally the first three letters of your surname followed by eight digits which will be on letters addressed to you from the college), you may still apply to the Learner Hardship Fund but payment may be delayed until you have actually enrolled.

Section 2 - Information about your course of study

You may wish to ask your tutor if you are not sure about the name of your course and whether it is full time or part time.

Section 3 - Support for childcare

You are required to provide information about your chosen registered childcare provider who must be registered with OFSTED. A copy of their Certificate of Registration and charges per hour or session will be required when you send in your application for assistance as well as a copy of your timetable. Childcare may include day nurseries, after school clubs, some crèches and childminders. Informal childcare, such as that provided by a relative, cannot be funded. If you need any specific advice about your application for help with childcare please contact the Learner Support teams on 01604 734244 or 01604 736324 for Daventry.

Learners under 20

Apply to the 'Care to Learn' scheme, details are overleaf.

Section 4 - Support for equipment, books, uniform and educational trips

We require a formal equipment list or letter from your tutor. You may be eligible for help towards the cost of compulsory residential trips and visits as well as the cost of travel to Higher Education interviews. Complete the boxes for each category with the cost for the whole academic year. Awards will be paid to a supplier wherever possible. **Items already purchased may not be reimbursed.**

Section 5 - Reason for application

Assistance may be available to learners facing hardship, **evidence will be required to identify a specific financial need.** This section gives you the opportunity to tell us why you require financial assistance. It is very important that you complete this section. Failure to do so will result in your application being delayed.

Section 6 & 7 - Income assessment

In order for us to assess the level of support you may receive, we require information about income into the household. If your household is in receipt of one of the benefits listed, a recent benefit letter will be required as evidence or a 08/09 Tax Credit Award Notice. If your household is not in receipt of a benefit, wage slips and bank statements are required. Applications without evidence of household income will not be processed and will be returned to you. If you are unsure about the suitability of evidence please contact the Learner Support team on 01604 734244 or 01604 736324 for Daventry.

Section 8 - Declaration

The declaration must be signed by you to show that you understand the rules regarding the Learner Hardship Fund.

Rules and regulations relating to the issue of the Learner Hardship Fund

- If your attendance falls to an unacceptable level you may be refused help with costs or asked to return any equipment/support already received. If you leave college before completing your studies, you may be asked to return any equipment provided.
- It is also important that you abide by the colleges code of conduct at all times

GUIDE TO THE LEARNER HARDSHIP FUND 2008/2009

Purpose and use of the Learner Hardship Fund

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) pays a grant to colleges so that they may provide, at their discretion, financial help to learners who face difficulty meeting the costs of coming to college and completing their studies. All learners that fulfil the criteria may apply to the Learner Hardship Fund for assistance towards the cost of equipment, books, childcare and educational trips. Payments to learners are made according to their individual needs and are subject to limits set by the LSC. Priority for the allocation of the Learner Hardship Funds is given to those who are without a Level 2 qualification or are from low income households. This is assessed by proof of current income-based benefits or through evidence of low income (current bank statements, wage slips etc). Residency eligibility is also required.

Where can I get advice and guidance about the Learner Hardship Fund?

Application forms can be obtained from the Learner Support Centres in Northampton and Daventry. Staff in the centres will be happy to give you information and advice about the financial support that may be available to you.

The college abides by the guidelines set for the LSC for administering and allocating funds to eligible learners on LSC funded courses. The criteria and formula used for assessing individual applications are agreed by the Learner Hardship Fund panel and the colleges Senior Management Team. If you would like more information on this, please see a member of the learner support team. There is an appeals procedure should any learner be dissatisfied with the outcome of their application.

Appeals Procedure

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your application you may appeal against the decision, in writing, to the Head of Learner Support, Northampton College, Booth Lane, Northampton, NN3 3RF.

You should state clearly why you are making an appeal and give reasons, together with supporting evidence, as to why your case should be reviewed. Your case will be reviewed by a panel which will include members of staff who were not involved in the original decision. A decision will be made and supplied to you within ten days of receipt of appeal.

Childcare

Learners under 20 years old

Parents under the age of 20 can apply to *Care to Learn* for assistance with childcare costs. The helpline number is 0800 121 8989, or you can get further information from your Connexions Personal Adviser or from the Learner Support Centre.

Learners over 20 years old

You are required to provide information about your chosen registered childcare provider who must be registered with OFSTED. Childcare may include day nurseries, after school clubs, some crèches and childminders.

Informal childcare, such as that provided by a relative, cannot be funded. For learners on a full time course, the maximum amount of childcare that will be eligible for funding is £5000.00 per academic year.

Eligible learners will be expected to contribute towards the cost of their registered childcare. Childcare places are available at Northampton College Booth Lane, Lower Mounts and Daventry sites and learners will be expected to use these places first. You will be expected to make use of those places before using a private nursery. Childcare contracts will be reviewed on a termly basis and may be subject to immediate change. If you withdraw from your course, childcare support will cease from the day of withdrawal and you will be responsible for any further costs incurred.

If you need any specific advice about your application for help with childcare please contact the Learner Support Team on 01604 734244 or 01604 736306 for Daventry.

Here to help!

Contact the Learner Support team if you have any financial worries or queries. The staff will be happy to give advice about other funding which may be available to you, e.g. charities, and can also give you advice on studying whilst in receipt of benefits etc.

Learner Support Centre – Northampton

01604 734066

Learner Support Centre - Daventry

01604 736324