

Learner Bursary Policy

2026 - 27

Our Newham Learning & Skills
Part-time adult education

Policy Owner: Head of Operations**Next review: 30 June 2027**

Our Newham Learning & Skills (ONLS) Bursary Support Fund aims to assist learners experiencing financial hardship during their studies at ONLS. The Bursary provides support for students with associated course-related costs, such as travel expenses, essential course materials, childcare and examination fees. To be eligible, the course of study must be funded through the Adult Skills Fund (ASF) or an Advanced Learner Loan and the requested costs must be directly related to the course requirements.

Key points:

- Bursary support is exclusively available to eligible learners.
- ONLS has a limited allocation of bursary funds.
- In cases of high demand, reduced awards may be granted.
- Once the fund is fully committed, no further applications or awards will be processed.
- The ONLS Community Learning and ONLS 'Full Cost' provision are not covered by this fund.

Learner Support Bursary Eligibility:

To be eligible for bursary support, learners must:

- Meet the Greater London Authority (GLA) criteria for full funding fee remission.
- Demonstrate full commitment to their programme of study with a minimum attendance of 90% and satisfactory progress (tutor reference).

Bursary (Financial Support):

The bursary prioritises learners facing economic disadvantages, including those requiring support for travel learning-related expenses and those experiencing financial difficulties. This fund can assist with:

- Subsidised travel to and from ONLS centres for journeys exceeding 2 miles from home, involving multiple bus/train connections.
- Equipment and materials essential for the course of study, up to £50 (a list of essential items will be provided by the Curriculum team).
- Tuition and exam fees (up to 70% of fees).
- Childcare support is available in ONLS in-house crèches.

Travel Allocation:

- Travel expenses are capped at a maximum of £5 per day for those living more than 2 miles' distance from ONLS centres where learners are attending a course. This allocation will be reviewed against actual bus/tube fares.

Tuition/Registration Costs:

- The ONLS bursary covers course tuition and examination fees.

Equipment:

- Learners may apply for essential additional equipment or resources needed for their studies. Materials expenses are capped at a maximum of £50. Support is contingent on the equipment being vital for course achievement. Course materials required will be informed by the Curriculum Manager of the relevant curriculum area.

Childcare Support:

- Childcare support can be provided through the ONLS on-site crèches for children from 15 months to 5 years old.
- The bursary is there to support the childcare session but does not include food and drink which will be charged separately.
- Learners should use their government-funded childcare entitlement (now up to 30 hours per week for eligible working parents of children from 9 months old) before accessing bursary-funded childcare through ONLS.

Bursary Application Process:

- Learners must submit a completed online bursary application form, a link to which can be found towards the end of this document.
- Learners demonstrating an income below £35,000 will need to provide one-month payslips or a contract of employment dated no more than three months before the bursary application date.
- Applicants will be notified of the application's outcome within ten working days.
- For travel, applications will be cross-referenced with the ONLS course register.
- ONLS may request additional evidence if the provided evidence does not clearly align with the application criteria.
- All bursary evidence will be reviewed.

Appeals Procedure:

- If a learner is dissatisfied with their award, they should initially speak to their tutor or Curriculum Manager.
- The investigation may involve gathering further information on personal circumstances, financial position, attendance and motivation on the course.
- Failure to provide requested information or evidence will invalidate the appeal.
- Appeals will be reviewed and a decision made by the Head of Operations.
- Learners will be informed of the outcome and any actions taken.
- If a learner remains dissatisfied following the decision they have the right to complain following the ONLS Learner Complaints Procedure.

Administration:

- All applications will be documented in the bursary tracker.
- Each application must include appropriate evidence validating compliance with bursary criteria.
- ONLS Business/MIS Team will administer the LSBF applications.

- Equipment or resource purchases will adhere to ONLS suppliers and financial regulations set by LBN Finance.
- Delays or supplier-related issues will be communicated with the applicant.
- For independently made purchases, a valid receipt and bank statement copy will be requested for payment to the bank account.

Special Circumstances:

In situations where a learner requires emergency support whether due to priority concerns raised through ONLS Safeguarding or external agency involvement, funds will be made accessible. The process for handling such cases is as follows:

- The request for emergency support will be initiated by the Business Support Officers who will identify available support options.
- Subsequently, the request will be considered by the Head of Operations and Finance Lead, to determine the most appropriate course of action.
- For emergency financial support to be granted, agreement from the Head of Operations is essential. This decision will be made in conjunction with a confidential case overview, which must be presented alongside the request.

At ONLS, we consider fraudulent claims a matter of utmost seriousness. In the event that it is discovered that a claim made through the bursary has been fabricated or made with fraudulent intent, appropriate action will be taken. This may include recovering funds as necessary to rectify the situation. We are committed to maintaining the integrity of our support programmes and ensuring that assistance reaches those who genuinely require it.

Guidelines for the allocation of funds

Learner Support Bursary Fund (LSBF) (for accredited courses – age 19+)

- In all cases an attendance rate of at least 90% is expected of learners who receive funding.
- A contribution of a minimum of 30% will be expected from the learners for the course fee. The fund is limited and once exhausted it will not be possible to consider further applications.
- Written evidence of entitlement to state benefit or income dated within the last three months will be required at the time of application, in the form of payslips or proof of a means tested benefit.

Priority is given to the following learners:

- Those not in receipt of a means-tested benefit who can provide evidence of an income less than £35,000 and who may not be eligible for concessionary fees.
- Those in receipt of a means-tested benefit but not eligible for fee remission.

Learner Support Bursary is available for:

- **Tuition and Exam fees** – 70% paid directly on the learner's behalf.
- **Childcare Support** - ONLS will fully fund childcare in their in-house crèches during term time for those attending ONLS courses. It does not include food and drink which will be charged for.

- **Materials, books, equipment** – Reimbursed when receipts are provided. Learners may be able to apply for help with materials approved as essential and approved for completion of their qualification, books and equipment related to their course. Payment of a maximum of £50 will only be made on production of receipts. Stationery items (e.g. pens, binders, printing) are excluded. The Service will have the right to request the return of certain materials and equipment at the end of the course. ONLS reserves the right to keep a learner's work for display and marketing purposes where the learner has not been charged course expense fees for the materials. e.g. fees met by Learner Support Bursary funding.
- **Travel**- A maximum of £5 / day, towards the cost of travel by public transport for those who live more than 2 miles from home to place of learning. Payment will be made on production of receipts.

Additional Information:

- Preference will be given to applications which may lead to qualifications or employment opportunities. Learners need to show that they intend to use the course to progress into (or access) a qualification for obtaining employment.

Progression:

- Students wishing to continue the same subject from one year to the next must show progression, funding will not normally be awarded to repeat the same level in the same subject or for exam retakes.

Attendance and exams:

- Students must show commitment to the course with an attendance rate of at least 90%. If a student withdraws from the course before completion, or if attendance drops below an acceptable rate without a genuine explanation, they will be required to repay the funding granted to them. If a student has unavoidable reasons for withdrawing from a course, they must contact the Learner Support Bursary Administrator to explain and provide reasons and proof in writing.
- When funding is granted, students must take the appropriate exam or accreditation. If a recipient of Learner Support Bursary fails to sit the relevant exam they will not be eligible for further funding.

Previous withdrawals / low attendance:

- Students will not be eligible to re-apply if they have previously received funding and withdrawn from a course or if their attendance dropped below 90% unless they can demonstrate valid reasons.

Applications denied:

- If an application is denied, applicants may re-submit an application no sooner than the following term. For those denied funding, students must pay the balance of their fees. Otherwise the following will apply in respect of a refund of the amount already paid by the student:
- If the class has not started, the student is entitled to a full refund.

- If the class has started and they have attended, a calculation will be made according to the number of sessions attended. A refund of the balance will then be made.
- It is the learners' responsibility to advise the Department of Work & Pensions about any learner support received, as this may affect eligibility for some benefits.

Bursary Application Form:

- The bursary application is included in the online student application form. If it was not completed during that process, the form can be accessed separately via the following link: [ONLS Bursary Application Form](#)

Bursary Processing Schedule:

- Processing of the Learner Bursary support funds will be conducted 6 times across the academic year as followed for the 26/27 Academic Year:

	Start	Cut-off date	Paid up until	Payment Expected
Term A	14th September 2026	12 th October 2026	26 th October 2026	14 working days
	2 nd November 2026	7 th December 2026	21 st December 2026	14 working days
Term B	4 th January 2027	1 st February 2027	15 th February 2027	14 working days
	22 nd February 2027	22 nd March 2027	5 th April 2027	14 working days
Term C	12 th April 2027	10 th May 2027	24 th May 2027	14 working days
	7 th June 2027	5 th July 2027	19 th July 2027	14 working days

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of Operations.