

## 2021/22 BRIGHTER FUTURES BURSARIES PROTOCOL

Brighter Futures Merseyside Ltd will administer the Bursary Fund awarded within the Education and Skills Funding Agency's (ESFA) 16-19 Bursary Fund Guidelines. We aim to have clear and transparent processes including an appeals procedure. All recording along with evidence of eligibility will in addition follow Brighter Futures' procedures/guidelines.

The different types of additional support available to young people aged 16-19 who commence their training in the year 2021/2022 include:

### Vulnerable Bursary

The defined vulnerable groups are students who are:

- In care
- Care leavers
- Receiving Income Support, or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner.
- Receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right.

Students who meet the Vulnerable Bursary criteria can be eligible to receive a bursary of up to £1,200 per year or pro-rata in the case of short courses where students are assessed as requiring financial support for their programme. Applications are not guaranteed. Evidence to support the application will be needed such as written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the relevant Local Authority or the benefit award notice clearly stating the student's name and confirming they are entitled to the benefits in their own right.

Applications to the Vulnerable Bursary pot are not guaranteed and will be awarded based on individual financial requirements.

### Discretionary Bursary

This may be awarded on an identified financial needs basis and at the discretion of Brighter Futures to cover costs such as travel, books/equipment, meals, and other miscellaneous items associated with being in learning and will meet the Institution's assessment criteria below:

- Applicants must have met the 16-19 Study Programme eligibility criteria.
- Evidence of Household Income below £28,000 must accompany the application prior to assessment. As each application is individually assessed there may be some flexibility, for example, consideration would be given to the number of dependants in a household.
- The distance from the learner's home address to the training location will be taken into consideration. Each learner will need to detail their route to college and the mode of transport they expect to take, on page 3 of the application form. As each application is individually assessed there may be some flexibility depending on the safety of the route to the training centre and the method of transportation available.
- Based on the information received and if financial hardship is identified, the learner will be awarded:
  - A subsidy towards travel costs upon submission of evidence e.g. Travel Tickets/Weekly Pass. Learners should be aware that this may not equal 100% of the cost of evidence submitted; this will be dependent on each individual learner's financial assessment.

- Up to £3 per day towards lunch meals, this may, depending on eligibility criteria, include the 'Free Meals' element of support which has a separate list of criteria detailed on the Bursary Fund Application Form 2021/22. Learners eligible for the 'Free Meals' element of support will be provided with food vouchers on a weekly basis, up to a maximum value of £15. Learners not eligible for the 'Free Meals' element of support must submit food receipts as evidence.

In addition, if other barriers are identified, learners assessed as being eligible for the discretionary element, can also request financial assistance towards programme related clothing, equipment etc.

In both cases the young person will complete an application form and will provide the required evidence as listed on the Bursary Fund Application Form 2021/2022. The application will take no longer than 5-10 working days to process (upon receipt of the required evidence). Once an application has been approved, the learner will receive a confirmatory email detailing the funds they should expect to receive as a result of their individual financial assessment, subject to the appropriate evidence being submitted.

Receipt of the bursary will be conditional on the young person meeting agreed standards of attendance and behaviour, as detailed in the Brighter Futures Training Agreement and Code of Conduct which will be discussed at induction.

Please be aware that no payments will be made to approved Bursary applicants until after 6 weeks have elapsed since their programme start date. Once the student reaches this threshold and is a confirmed start on programme, payments will be made on a weekly basis dependent on receipt of acceptable reimbursement evidence. Any evidence retained for travel and/or meals during the first 6 weeks on programme, depending on eligibility, will be backdated and reimbursed after the 6-week threshold if sent into Brighter Futures as required.

After the initial 6-week period, period, any bursary evidence submitted exceeding 4 weeks from the date of purchase will not be backdated for reimbursement.

The Institution's Complaints Procedure is in place to cover:

- Queries/disagreements over applications for the Vulnerable and Discretionary Bursary funds and Free Meals.
- Queries/disagreements over the agreed standards of attendance and behaviour.