



# **National Horseracing College**

## **Bursary Fund Policy**

**1 Discretionary Bursary**

**2 Vulnerable Bursary**

**3 Free Meals Allowance**

**4 19+ Discretionary Bursary**

**5 Residential Bursary**

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## Introduction

This policy is based on the published guidance provided by the Department for Education (DfE) and consolidates best practice within the sector.

**Learners who are eligible for support are not automatically entitled to it.** If demand exceeds the available funding reduced awards may be given. When the funds are fully committed no further awards will be made.

## Statement

The funds are designed to support those learners most in need of financial support to enable them to engage in education provision.

The Bursary Funds and Free Meals Allowance can provide some financial assistance with the costs associated with attending the National Horseracing College; for example, course materials, equipment, transport and meals.

The funds are designed to assist a priority target group of learners who are socially or economically disadvantaged. The funds will be distributed in a consistent and transparent manner in accordance with the guidance issued by the DfE.

The aim of the National Horseracing College is to use the funds to make the maximum impact on recruitment, attendance, retention, achievement and success rates.

## Information

The DfE publishes guidance that sets out the criteria for the distribution of these funds.

All applicants must complete an application form at the start of the learner's course, available from the administration department or via by post at their request. Support is available for those who require assistance completing the application form.

## General Eligibility

All full time and part time DfE funded learners aged 16-19 and 19+ are eligible to apply for support.

Applications for an award are means tested and require proof of eligibility in support. Examples of suitable evidence are benefit letters, Tax Credit Award Notices or proof of low income to verify household income.

Home Office documentation is required where appropriate to prove residency status.

Learners who are undertaking waged Apprenticeships or full cost courses are not eligible for support.

## 1 Discretionary Bursary Fund

### Course Materials, Equipment and Transport

16-19 Discretionary Bursary is used to support learners from households with an annual income of less than £26,000 (gross). It can be used for course materials, equipment, transport and other course related costs.

Applications for assistance with the cost of essential equipment and transport will be supported where funds allow. Assessments will be made against equipment lists provided by the National Horseracing College prior to the start of the course. Any items purchased by learners will only be reimbursed with proof of the original receipted invoice from an approved supplier. A maximum award of up to £500 per learner is set to ensure funds meet all eligible learner needs where possible. The amount awarded from the Discretionary Bursary to eligible learners can be reviewed due to change of circumstances or available funds on a case-by-case basis. The Operations Director will lead on any such adjustments.

## 2 Vulnerable Bursary Fund

Learners who are identified as being in a defined vulnerable group may be eligible to receive up to £1,200 subject to meeting the National Horseracing College/Doncaster Equine College criteria as outlined below. Payments will be awarded on a **pro-rata basis** for learners on the Foundation Course, learners that start their courses late or complete early. A 12-week course may attract a bursary of £720.

To be eligible for these awards learners must not have had their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. Where learners turn 19 during their programme of study, they can continue to be supported to the end of the academic year. In care, fostered, care leavers and those with an EHCP may be eligible up to the age of 25.

All learners eligible to apply will be prioritised for funding as follows:

A bursary of up to £1,200 for young people in the following groups, defined as vulnerable:

- i. In care or fostered.
- ii. Care leaver.
- iii. Receiving Income Support (IS) or Universal Credit (UC) because they are financially supporting themselves.
- iv. Receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in their own right AS WELL AS Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right.

The amount of support they need to participate is based on an assessment of the actual participation needs and costs they have, they are not automatically awarded £1,200.

Eligible learners identified as most vulnerable will have their course materials and equipment, reimburse at the start of their course and as necessary through the duration of their course. Transport costs will be reimbursed on an ongoing basis throughout their course on production receipts.

### **3 Free Meals Allowance**

To be eligible for this allowance learners must be aged between 16 and 18 on 31st August of academic year they start. Learners who turn 19 during their study programme will remain eligible for a free meal until the end of the academic year in which they turn 19 or the end of their study programme, whichever is sooner.

For the purpose of eligibility for free meals, 'disadvantaged' is defined by the learner being in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC))
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 pa (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

It is important that institutions ensure they understand that a parent or learner must be in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits set out above to be eligible.

Working Tax Credit is not a qualifying benefit for free meals, and a parent or learner in receipt of Working Tax Credits is not entitled to a free meal. However, qualifying benefits do include the Working Tax Credit run on which is paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.

Learners must also satisfy the residency criteria set out in the DfE 'Funding regulation' guidance for the current academic year.

A learner, or their parent/guardian, must submit an application to the NHC using the appropriate form. Evidence of the award of the qualifying benefits set out above must also be provided, for example an award notice or letter from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) or HMRC.

Where eligible learners are not in receipt of full subsistence while on the work placement element of their programme they will be paid £2.61 per meal in respect of the free meals allowance. Entitlement is only for workdays spent in the placement as confirmed by the placement provider and will be paid by BACs 1 week in arrears.

### **4 19+ Discretionary Bursary**

Learners aged 19 and over may apply for support from the NHC Discretionary Bursary Fund which is offered subject to proof of need and at the discretion of the Trustees. A maximum of £400 will be granted subject to proof of need and can be used for offsetting the residential fee only.

### **5 16-19 Residential Bursary Fund (RBF)**

RBF provides financial help towards the costs of accommodation for learners attending one of the designated institutions delivering specialist provision, where that specialist provision needs the learner to be resident in order to participate because it is not available locally and/or

because it needs learners to be available at unsociable hours on a regular basis. RBF enables young people to gain a substantial qualification in a specialist subject that they would not be able to get at a non-specialist institution.

RBF provides a contribution towards residential costs for those learners the institution assesses as facing the most significant financial barriers to participation. It is not to provide support to all learners on residentially delivered provision, or to necessarily cover the full costs for each learner.

It is expected that most RBF funding will be used to cover accommodation costs. RBF should be used to help learners with the costs of accommodation while they are in further education. The accommodation may be owned or managed by the institution or by a private landlord.

Learners meeting eligibility criteria for Vulnerable or Discretionary Bursary will be considered for assistance from the RBF subject to sufficient funds being available at the time of application. The College will assess the level of support on an individual basis and use the RBF to cover all or part of the residential fees charged while at the College. A maximum of up to £1450 towards residential costs may be allocated for a 12-week residential course. Learners not eligible for a government bursary may have a discretionary award by the NHC to reduce their residential costs while attending the College.

**Criteria for Award from the Residential Bursary Fund (RBF)** The National Horseracing College will assess the learner's actual need for help with residential costs, taking account of their household income when deciding how much RBF to award. A fully evidenced Household Income of less than £26,000 or evidence of being in receipt of a benefit or allowance such as an award notice showing receipt of benefits, a P60, Tax Credit Award Notice, evidence of self-employment income etc. must be presented before any Bursary Award can be assessed.

### Administration

Staff and learners will be informed about learner support funds and the Free Meals allowance and how to apply. Application forms will be available from the Administration department, prior to the start of the learner's course or sent to individuals by post at their request.

Application forms must be completed for all awards made from the learner support funds. Up to date valid supporting evidence (within 3 months from the date of application form) must be produced at the time of application; staff administering the funds will verify the information on the application form.

Decisions will be made in accordance with the criteria agreed at the beginning of the course. Applicants will be informed of decisions in writing or verbally. Decisions aim to be communicated to applicants within two weeks of a correctly completed application form being submitted and processed.

Cash bursary payments will only be awarded in exceptional circumstances.

It is expected that learners attend and be on time to all lectures, practical sessions, enrichment activities, tutorials and any other timetabled activity which is part of their programme of study.

Eligible learners identified as most vulnerable will have their course materials and equipment, reimbursed at the start of their course and as necessary through the duration of their course. Transport costs will be reimbursed on an ongoing basis throughout their course on production receipts.

Where learners are in breach of the National Horseracing College Code of Conduct this will lead to withdrawal or suspension of any bursary or grant payments, subject to review.

## Recording and Maintaining Data (PICs)

### 16-19 Bursary Fund

Data fields for the 16-19 Bursary Fund are included in the 2025/26 ILR and should be completed to record details of the bursaries awarded to learners in the defined vulnerable groups and for discretionary purposes.

The following codes should be entered in the LSR field of the ILR:

*Code 55: 16-19 Bursary – Vulnerable Groups.*

Where a young person is in the following groups, defined as vulnerable:

- v. In care or fostered.
- vi. Care leaver.
- vii. Receiving Income Support (IS) or Universal Credit (UC) because they are financially supporting themselves.
- viii. Receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in their own right AS WELL AS Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or UC in their own right.

*Code 56: 16-19 Bursary – Discretionary.*

Where a young person is from a low-income household income of less than £26,000 gross.

*Code 57: Residential Support*

Where a young person is awarded support from the RBF.

**Please Note:** Where a young person falls into all categories both codes should be entered in the LSR fields of the ILR

### 16-19 Free Meals

The new mandatory 'free meal' field in the ILR must be completed. Data fields for the 16-19 free meal allowance are included in the contract year ILR "FME"

The following codes should be entered in the LSR field of the ILR:

- 2: 16-19 year old eligible for and in receipt of free meals

## Appeals

If anyone is dissatisfied with the decision regarding an award, they will be advised to appeal in writing following National Horseracing College's complaints procedure. They should state clearly why they are appealing and give reasons. Supporting evidence should be provided when requesting a review of the decision.

## Allocation

To avoid multiple applications, payments will be considered for the course duration.

Applicants will be notified verbally how much has been allocated according to the categories for which they have applied, including how payment will be made.

Recipients of bursaries will have their attendance monitored regularly throughout the duration of their programme of learning. Awards will be reviewed if attendance falls below the National Horseracing College attendance criteria.

In all cases the application will be judged on a learner's individual need as outlined in the DfE current Funding Guidance.

### Responsibilities

Foundation Course Coordinator  
Senior Instructor

1. To be the first contact point for applications.
2. To provide information, advice and guidance to learners about the fund, how to apply and other financial assistance.
3. To ensure the maintenance of records and efficient administration of bursaries in line with DfE guidelines.

MIS & Compliance Manager

1. To approve and monitor the administration of the application process and provide timely reports.
2. To report to the Senior Management Team regarding the usage of the funds and make recommendations for necessary changes.
3. Extract data from system for eligibility for payment on a 6 weekly basis.
4. Maintain records of free meals taken for audit purposes.

Accounts Clerk

1. Process all accepted/approved payments as necessary.

### Control Checklist

- A National Horseracing College Bursary Application Form has been completed.
- A National Horseracing College Bursary Fund Recording Form has been completed.
- Copies of relevant documents relating to income have been seen, verified and details recorded on the Bursary Fund Recording Form.
- Learner bank details have been checked against bank statement/card.
- A copy of childcare requirements confirming costs, times and registration is attached.
- Payment to be made to third party where appropriate.
- Attendance has been confirmed

### Appendices

#### Appendix A – National Horseracing College 16-19 Bursary Fund, 16-19 Free Meals Allowance Application form

Amend once updated

<Q:\Quality Operations Manual\11 Recruitment & Selection\11 15a Bursary Application Form.doc>

#### Appendix B – 16-19 Bursary Fund, 16-19 Free Meals Allowance form

<Q:\Quality Operations Manual\11 Recruitment & Selection\11 15c 16-19 bursary DLS Funds recording form.doc>