

Discretionary Learner Support Fund Policy 25/26

Discretionary Learner Support Fund (DLSF) is available to support learners who are suffering from financial difficulties in relation to their studies at Camden Adult Community Learning. This is a limited fund that sits within Camden Adult Community Learning (ACL)'s overall annual allocation and as such will mostly apply to learners on accredited programmes within the Service. However, Camden ACL reserves the right to deploy the fund across its Adult Education Budget learning if it deems necessary.

The course being studied must be fundable through the Adult Education Budget (AEB) and the costs requested must be related to the course study requirements and only the course study requirements. These costs could include support with travel, essential course materials, childcare etc.

Access to support via the Discretionary Learner Support Fund must be made via an application form. It is by nature discretionary and minimum criteria will need to be met. Camden Adult Community Learning does not issue cash payments and DLSF will be paid via other means such as Oyster Cards for transport, the Service directly purchasing textbooks for learners or access to the Service's bespoke creche services etc.

Eligibility

- Most Learners who apply must be on an accredited programme of study either within the Service or at a subcontractor. (In exceptional circumstances the Service reserves the right to consider applying the fund to non-accredited learning.)
- Learners must be on an AEB funded programme.
- Individual applicants must earn less than the London Living Wage.
- Parents whose children access free school meals may also apply.
- Learners who receive DLSF are expected to attend well, produce set work, and fully complete their programme of study.
- Supporting evidence of the above will be asked for.

DLSF Process

- Learners complete an application form that is provided by and returned to their teacher.
- Programme Management/Sub-contracting Management to provide the paperwork to MIS.
- Decision made with Programme Manager/Sub-contractor Management with Deputy Head or Head of Service input.
- Camden reserves the right to ask for supplementary information from a learner in support of an application for DLSF at any stage of the process.
- Learners will be made aware of the result of their application within 10 days of application.

Appeals

- Appeals of decisions will come to the Head of Service directly via the Programme Manager/Sub- Contractor Management. (A clear rationale as to why the applicant believes an appeal should be upheld should be provided.)

Sub-contractors and DLSF

Learners at sub-contractors are entitled to access DLSF like any other Camden ACL Learners. As this fund is not in addition to the Camden ACL's grant allocation neither will it be in addition to Sub-contractor's contractual allocation figure. If DLSF accounts for 10% of the allocated funds, then a meeting between sub-contractors and the responsible Camden ACL management will occur to establish the advisability or otherwise of continuing to issue more DLSF.

Policy review

December 2025