

New Directions

Learner Support



New Directions may be able to offer you support with your studies if you have financial difficulties, learning difficulties or any physical disabilities. Financial support can be accessed through the Discretionary Support Fund. If you have a learning difficulty and/or have a physical disability we may be able to assist you with your studies with Additional Learner Support.

What is the Discretionary Support Fund?

The Discretionary Support Fund (DSF) is a discretionary fund provided by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). DSF provides access to learning for learners who have financial constraints. Funds may be used to pay for:

- Exam fees, assessment fees
- Books, course materials or other equipment essential for studies
- Childcare provided by an Ofsted registered provider

DSF can only be used to subsidise tuition fees in exceptional circumstances.

Who is Eligible?

- Be 16 or over
- Have been accepted onto and be studying a programme of learning funded by the LSC
- Have 'HOME' student status
- Students who are economically disadvantaged (such as those receiving benefits)
- Those aged over 19 who don't have a Level 2 qualification
- Students who have been in care or on probation, young parents and others considered 'at risk'

Who is not Eligible?

- Under 16
- Oversea students
- An Asylum Seeker aged over 19
- Receiving full public funding for higher education
- On a learndirect course
- On a New Deal programme (except New Deal for Lone Parents)
- On an apprenticeship training scheme
- On a Work Based Learning course
- On an Adult & Community Learning course (ACL)

How do I Apply?

Application forms are available from the Learner Support Team. Please contact a member of staff or phone 0118 901 5256

Finalising an Application

The Learner Support Team (LST) takes appropriate action to ensure the funds are paid as appropriate; no monies are paid directly to the learner. Instead:

- Course/Assessment/Exam fees are assigned to the DSF by the Customer Relations Office
- Course materials are ordered by the Learner Support Team
- Childcare providers send invoices to the Learner Support Team

Can I appeal if my Application is Unsuccessful?

Yes, there is a right of appeal for learners. Where the LST rejects an application, the LST completes the 'DSF rejection form' and gives it to the learner. Relevant information on why the application was rejected should be provided and discussed as necessary. You can appeal by contacting the Customer Relations Department.

The completed application forms will be kept by the LST along with copies of the supporting documentation.

Can I apply for funding for several courses?

You can only apply for funding for one course per year if not continuing your studies. For example if you complete an ECDL level 1 course you can then progress to the ECDL level 2 course in the same year. A new DSF form and a re-enrolment form must be completed. If the evidence originally provided is still current, then no further evidence is required.

Funded by:



What is Additional Learner Support?

Additional Learning Support (ALS) is a discretionary fund provided by the LSC. ALS is used to provide direct learning support to learners, over and above what is normally provided in a course, to ensure that learners get the most from their course and achieve their learning goals.

Learners needing ALS may have a range of support needs including:

- Learning difficulties
- English, Maths or Language (ESOL) needs, whether written and/or spoken
- Physical needs or disabilities (e.g. mobility, hearing, sight problems, etc)

For example the ALS fund might be used to provide:

- Additional teaching within or in addition to the regular classes
- Specialist assistance, such as mobility assistant, reader, note-taker, technician, translator or signer

The ALS fund is used to provide Learner Support Workers (LSW's) to assist in courses for adults with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) courses. As employees of the Service, LSW's are appointed by the Personnel Officer, who maintains a list of those available, along with contact details, and so on.

While the ALS fund does not cover the purchase of equipment, New Directions may be able to meet specific learning needs through the provision of:

- Assistive equipment, such as hearing loops
- Course material in other formats, such as enlarged fonts or coloured paper for printed materials, audio tapes instead of handouts, and so on.

Some learning support (e.g. provision of an LSW) will use the fund, while other support (e.g. provision of a volunteer, photocopying enlarged course handouts) may not involve any direct costs.

The learner will often have a clear idea of what is needed, and may already have developed their own coping strategies in similar situations; as long as their stated needs fall within the guidelines and allocated budget, New Directions will endeavour to meet them.

If New Directions cannot provide a suitable LSW or volunteer, then we may consider allowing a friend or family member nominated by the learner to attend the course as an unpaid volunteer with the aim of assisting the learner.

ALS funds cannot be used to support learners who have enrolled in courses that are above their level of capability. Similarly, ALS cannot provide English, Maths or Language (ESOL) support in Skills for Life courses, where developing English, Maths or Language (ESOL) skills is the primary goal of the course. ALS is not used to provide financial assistance to learners, and does not cover needs such as childcare or transport.

How do I Apply for Additional Learner Support?

You can apply directly to the Learner Support Team on 0118 901 5256 or contact your Tutor who can contact the Learner Support Team on your behalf. A Learner Support Plan will be drawn up with your agreement, to assist you with your learning.

Disclosure

Applications for support will be treated sensitively and confidentially to ensure your privacy is respected. Only staff that will need to know will have access to the information that you provide. We will obtain your permission should we feel it necessary to pass on information to another organisation.

The Service has an obligation to respect your wishes should you choose not to disclose information. You should note that this will restrict what help we are able to provide for you.

Our staff are obliged to ensure that you will not have to explain your situation repeatedly.

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