

Care to Learn Guidance 2025-26

1. Policy Statement

Care to Learn (C2L) provides funding for childcare to help young parents (defined as those aged under 20) continue in education after the birth of a child. The scheme provides funding for childcare whilst the young parent is engaged in a study programme and is not able to provide care for their child. It can also help the young parent with any additional travel costs involved in taking the child to the childcare provider. C2L can also provide funding for childcare whilst young parents are on work placements, where these are a defined part of the study programme.

2. Student Eligibility Criteria and Award

For the student to be eligible for Care to Learn funding they must meet the following criteria:

The young parent must be under 20 years old on the date they start their study programme. Young parents who become 20 years old during their study programme can continue to get funding to the end of that specific study programme, so to the end of the same programme at the same level.

The young parent must be the main carer and in receipt of Child Benefit for the Child(ren) for whom they are claiming Care to Learn. If a young parent loses custody of their child(ren), even temporarily, they must notify the college immediately. The mother or father can claim C2L as long as:

- 2.1** the other parent is unable to provide childcare, for example, they are also in education or are absent; or
- 2.2** the other parent is not claiming childcare paid through any other source, for example, government funded early years places or Childcare Tax Credits.

Young parents must be living and studying in England to receive C2L.

A London weighting applies to the scheme. The London weighted maximum is £195 per child per week (the national rate is £180 per child per week). Eligibility for London weighting is determined by the young parent's home address and applies to the following Boroughs:

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Barking and Dagenham	Islington
Barnet	Kensington & Chelsea
Bexley	Kingston-Upon-Thames
Brent	Lambeth
Bromley	Lewisham
Camden	Merton
Croydon	Newham
Ealing	Redbridge
Enfield	Richmond-Upon-Thames
Greenwich	Southwark
Hammersmith & Fulham	Sutton
Haringey	Tower Hamlets
Harrow	Waltham Forest
Havering	Wandsworth
Hillingdon	Westminster
Hounslow	

2.3 Residency

Students must also meet the Residency Criteria in DfE funding rules:
[DFE Funding Rules Post 16](#)

Young parents must have the legal right to be resident in the UK at the start of their study programme. If a young parent states that they are not a British or Irish citizen, they will only be eligible for Care to Learn if one of the following immigration conditions apply:

They are an asylum seeker aged:

- Under 18
- 18 or over and a care leaver aged 18 or 19 (they must provide a letter from their local authority that show their address and confirms they are a care leaver with their application).
- They have the following residency status:

Refugee status	Indefinite Leave to Enter
Humanitarian Protection	Limited Leave to Remain
Discretionary Leave to Remain	Limited Leave to Enter
Indefinite Leave to remain	Leave Outside the Rules

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3. Study Programme

The students study programme must be funded directly from public funding.

3.1 The types of study programmes eligible are:

- 3.1.1 GCSE's, A Levels and BTEC's;
- 3.1.2 Non-accredited day sessions and short programmes such as First Aid, Healthy Eating, and Parenting;
- 3.1.3 FE study programmes in Higher Education (HE) institution, including access courses and diplomas; and
- 3.1.4 Foundation HE courses where they are followed at an FE institution, for example, a BTEC diploma

3.2 The following study programmes are **not** eligible for C2L:

- 3.2.1 privately funded education, so an institution where students are required to pay tuition fees
- 3.2.2 voluntary work that is not a required part of an agreed study programme
- 3.2.3 apprenticeships, because apprentices are paid by their employer
- 3.2.4 HE courses in an HE institution or FE institution, including courses leading to a first degree, HND, HNC diploma in HE, foundation degree or initial teacher training
- 3.2.5 Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQ's), except for the very small number of young parents aged 19 but under 20 doing a HTQ funded by an Advanced Learner Loan
- 3.2.6 Social activities/groups where no actual programme of study takes place
- 3.2.7 Any instances where a young parent is still looking after their child for example, while they are undertaking a study programme with a childcare provider and the child is still with the parent.

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4. Study Programme duration

C2L will provide help with childcare costs for the duration of the student's study programme. Where students are enrolled on non-accredited, community-based courses like parenting and healthy eating, C2L is only payable for a maximum of six months in the academic year. This reflects that these courses are designed for short term use to provide a particular set of skills or knowledge and/or to give the young parent the confidence to progress to other education or training.

5. Study time, work experience and industry placements.

Students can claim C2L for independent study time where it is required as part of their study programme to complete coursework, undertake revision or homework. The amount of independent study time that is appropriate must be agreed between the college and the student.

C2L will support time needed to undertake work experience and industry placements but only where these have been identified as an integral part of the study programme.

Costs associated with independent study time, work experience and industry placements will be included as part of the C2L weekly maximum. (£180 per child per week outside of London or £195 per child per week in London) and these costs are not extra.

6. Childcare provision

C2L will only pay for childcare provision that is appropriately registered with Ofsted and must be registered in one of the following ways

- 6.1** On the early years register with either Ofsted or a childminder agency
- 6.2** On the compulsory and/or voluntary part of the general childcare register with either Ofsted or a childminder agency
- 6.3** Offered by schools (who are exempt from Ofsted registration for children aged 2+) such as school run breakfast and after school clubs, and holiday care.

If general childcare provision is not suitable for the child, then the college will give consideration for a specialist provision.

As part of the application process the childcare provider must supply evidence

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that they are Ofsted Registered with a rating of 3/Secure or above.

Where the childcare provider is related to the child, the childcare provider must:

- live apart from the child;
- be providing registered childcare for other children who are not related at the same time as the child they are related to; and
- be Ofsted registered

7. Payments to Childcare Providers

Care to Learn childcare payments will be paid direct to the childcare provider by BACS payment at the end of each month. Payments will only be paid while the parent is regularly attending their course and their attendance will be checked before each monthly childcare payment. Discretion will be used in the case of short absences, such as illness or family emergency

Care to Learn payments will stop immediately if the parent stops attending their course or removes their child from childcare.

The only circumstance where a reimbursement will be paid to a young parent for childcare costs, is if they have to pay the childcare provider before the C2L application has been assessed and all evidence meets the eligibility criteria. In this case the college will require receipts from the student to show proof of payment to the childcare provider before a reimbursement can be paid to the young parent.

8. Responsibilities of the Young Parent

The young parent must advise the college of any of the following changes so that adjustments can be made:

- 8.1** any changes relating to their residency status
- 8.2** any changes in travel costs between childcare and home – an increase or decrease or the parent needing to claim travel costs later in the year
- 8.3** changes in childcare arrangements/requirements – the number of days/hours, changing their study programme
- 8.4** intending to withdraw from their course.
- 8.5** If they are intending to remove their child from childcare

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- 8.6** Have very good attendance in order for the C2L childcare payments to be made to the childcare provider each month.

9. Responsibilities of the Childcare Provider

The Childcare provider must inform the college of any of the following changes so that adjustments can be made:

- 9.1** The Childcare Provider must advise the college of any revised childcare fees or a change in their bank account details
- 9.2** The Childcare Provider must inform the college if the child's attendance is poor or if the young parent removes the child from childcare

10. Travel Payments

As part of the funding C2L can contribute towards travel for the student, if it is necessary for the student to take their child(ren) between childcare and home. Travel payments are only paid if they are additional to the student's normal travel costs from home to the College. If the childcare is based on the way to or on site of the college then no additional travel can be claimed.

Any travel claims will be part of the childcare costs (maximum allocation will not be exceeded) and must be the cheapest option. If travelling by car (not private taxi) the rate used will be 25p per mile.

11. Deposits and Registration fees

C2L will pay a maximum deposit of £250 per child if the childcare provider requires this. Deposits will be paid from the C2L funding. C2L will also pay registration fees charged by the childcare provider, up to a maximum of £80 per child. These are one-off payments that will not be included as part of the weekly maximum and cannot be paid in future academic years if the student uses the same childcare provider.

12. Summer retainers

The college can pay summer retainers to childcare providers, if required to hold the childcare place over the summer holiday period. This only applies

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if the student is finishing study in one year and continuing their study in the next academic year. The young parent must still meet the eligibility criteria for this to be paid.

To be eligible for the summer retainer for summer 2026, the student must:

- 12.1.1** have received C2L funding in the academic year 2025 to 2026 and be intending to return to the study programme in the academic year 2026 to 2027;
- 12.1.2** be on a study programme that has lasted for 6 weeks or more in the academic year 2025 to 2026;
- 12.1.3** be on a study programme that finishes no earlier than 26 May 2026
- 12.1.4** be intending to continue with the same childcare provider they used during academic year 2025 to 2026; and
- 12.1.5** have been using the childcare provider for a minimum of six weeks

C2L can pay the summer retainer for a maximum of eight weeks, and this cannot be more than the C2L weekly maximum rate.

13. Raising awareness

The College has information on the website about Care to Learn and will send out communications to students at intervals during the academic year which includes information on bursary, free meals and care to learn. New applicants and returning students are sent notification of the financial support available and the application process.

The College has a single online application form, which includes financial support from bursary funds, free meals and care to learn. The online application form will be available on the College's MyNCC App and the student VLE from September of the new academic year.

Bursary, free meals and care to learn awards **do not** automatically carry over from one year to the next, and students will need to make a new application for each academic year.

14. Making an application

On making an application for Care to Learn, students will need to upload the

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following evidence to their application:

- 14.1** Evidence that they are financially responsible for the child by uploading a copy of the front and back of their Child Benefit letter and the child's birth certificate.
- 14.2** A copy of a letter from the childcare provider stating their address and contact details, their Ofsted register number or Unique Reference Number (URN). The letter must detail the fees charged per day, the days per week that childcare is provided for and the start date that childcare commenced. The childcare provider must also provide the company bank details for payment to be made.

The application for bursary, free meals and care to learn will be assessed by the Bursary Team. The outcome of the assessment will be communicated to students via their student email. Therefore, students should check their student email account regularly for communications from the Bursary Team.

Applications submitted without the full evidence required cannot be assessed, in these circumstances the Bursary Team will contact the student to explain what is required. This will delay the processing of the application and payment to the childcare provider; therefore, it is important to upload all the documents required when making the application.

A copy of the correspondence sent from the Bursary Team to the student can also be found on the student bursary portal in the documents section.

15. Appeals

If the student believes that their application has been assessed incorrectly, they should contact the Bursary Team at their campus by email within the first 10 working days of receiving the notification. They should make an appeal in writing giving details why they think their application has been assessed incorrectly.

A panel will review the application and the decision made by the Bursary Team. The student may be asked to provide extra documents or information about their situation. Once the panel have all the information to review the application, they will respond to the student within 10 working days with a decision. The panel's decision is final.

If the student is still are unhappy with the outcome of the appeal, they should follow the college complaints procedure found here: [Complaints Procedure](#)

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16. Fraudulent Claims

It is the College's duty to protect public funds from the possibility of fraudulent claims. The College asks for detailed information to check the student's eligibility for funding and we may invite applicants for interview so we can distribute the funds correctly. If the student's claim is considered fraudulent, i.e., through false representation of the eligibility criteria, the College will request that the funds awarded are repaid in full. If the student fails to repay this, the College may take legal action to recover the funds. This student may also result in the student being subject to disciplinary action.

Government guidance advises that institutions that identify significant fraud should report it to the Department for Education.

17. Data Protection

College employees, involved in administering the 16-19 Care to Learn Funds, comply with the College's GDPR policy on storing and transferring information during the application process and in payment of funds.