

Plymouth YMCA Access Bursary Fund 2011/12

What is the Plymouth YMCA Access Bursary Fund?

This is a new scheme to help young people who are facing financial hardship to stay in full-time education. We have designed this scheme, with support from Plymouth Adult and Community Learning Service (PACLS) and Plymouth City Council (PCC), in response to the Government's decision to close its Education Maintenance Allowance scheme and some of the other learner support funds. The funding for this scheme is provided by the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA). All schemes comprise two parts; Guaranteed Bursaries and Discretionary Bursaries.

Guaranteed bursaries

Young people who are most in need will be eligible for a bursary of £1,200 a year. This includes young people in care, care leavers, young people receiving income support, and disabled young people receiving both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance.

Discretionary bursaries

Other young people who need financial support to help them to stay in education or training may also be able to claim a bursary to help with costs of transport, food, equipment or other course-related costs. The fund will provide assistance to students whose access to, or completion of, education is inhibited by financial constraints or barriers. The bursary can be used for costs such as; books and equipment, course costs such as field trips, accommodation and meals or clothing and uniforms.

Eligibility

All students who are studying on programmes funded by the YPLA, through our partnership with PACLS, or European Social Fund, full time or part-time courses, who are 16 years and over and satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

- (1) Students aged at least 16 and under 19 years of age on 31 August 2011 who are:
in care, are leaving care, are in direct receipt of Income Support or are disabled and in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance
- (2) Students aged at least 16 and under 19 years of age on 31 August 2011 who could claim free school meals; i.e. family in receipt of Child Tax Credit with a family income of less than £16,190.
- (3) Students outside of the above categories facing barriers to continuing in Post-16 education due to severe financial hardship. Awards for these students are dependent on available funding and will be considered after awards for students in the first two groups are confirmed.

If you are under 16 or over 19 on 31st August 2011 or you do not meet the YPLA residency qualifications you will be unable to apply to this Access Bursary Fund.

Application Process

The Access Bursary Fund is a limited fund and Plymouth YMCA will prioritise this funding against the categories listed below.

An easy to complete application form will be available from the Community Learning department throughout the academic year.

The fund will be split equally across the three terms and students will need to apply once per term to ensure fair access for all students who are studying at Plymouth YMCA. All applications will be assessed within one month and a decision on the level of support will be confirmed to each student, in writing. Payments will be made to students monthly in arrears and this will be via a cheque payment. All payments will be subject to acceptable levels of attendance, behaviour and completion of course work.

Category 1

Students who are currently in care (as defined by social services), are leaving or have recently left care, are in receipt of Income Support in their own name or are disabled and in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance.

Students in this category are guaranteed £1,200, subject to continued attendance, behaviour and standards of work.

Category 2

Students aged under 19 on 31 August 2011 and who fall within the income limit for claiming Free School Meals. Eligible students in this group will be eligible for a Bursary award; however the level will be subject to availability of funds.

Category 3

Once funds are committed to meet the applications within the above Categories, Plymouth YMCA will consider applications for emergency payments to support students facing severe financial hardship.

Students in this group may be awarded a contribution towards essential course costs if funds permit. However it may not be possible to consider awards in this category until after 31 March 2012.



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