

Financial Information

For learners aged 19 and over in the 2026-2027 Academic Year

The College have funds available to provide support for learners who have a specific financial hardship which impacts their ability to take part or continue in learning. These funds are age specific, and the College must comply with Funding Body guidance when considering applications and allocations of funding. There are two streams of funding available to learners aged 19+ depending on age and level of study. To apply for support learners must complete an Application for Financial Assistance and provide the necessary evidence. Application forms are available from the main College Reception and on the College website.

1.Learner Support Fund (LSF)

To be eligible learners must be:

- Aged 19+ on the 31st of August 2026 and studying up to level 2
- Aged 19 to 23 on the 31st of August 2026 and studying for their first full level 3 qualification.
- From a household in receipt of an income-based benefit – e.g. Universal Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit **or**
- From a household with a gross annual income below £30,000

2.Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund

To be eligible learners must have an Advanced Learner Loan (A.L.L.) approved by the Student Loans Company and be:

- Aged 19+ on 31st of August 2026 and studying a **second or subsequent level 3** qualification
- Aged 24+ on 31st of August 2026 and studying a level 3 qualification which does not qualify for the 'Level 3 free courses for jobs' offer.
- In receipt of an Advanced Learner Loan
- From a household in receipt of an income-based benefit e.g. Universal Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit **or**
- From a household with a gross annual income below £30,000

Categories of Support

- **Travel** – Eligible learners receive a reimbursement of public transport costs or a mileage allowance of 30p per mile if using their own transport (home to college/placement miles only). Claims are made using the Repayment of Travel Expenses form. These are available on the College website or from the main Reception and can be submitted to financial.support@derwentside.ac.uk or to Reception. Learners using public transport must submit used bus tickets along with the claim form. Payments are made by BACS transfer and forms must be submitted no later than 12 noon on a Wednesday to ensure payment the following Friday.

- **Meals** – Eligible learners receive a free meal from the College canteen each day they are timetabled to attend. The College operates a cashless system, and learners must consent to have their fingerprint taken to access their allowance.
- **Uniform and Equipment** – Learners who are fully funded for their course will not be charged for essential equipment i.e. items without which they cannot complete their qualification. Learners who are eligible can have the cost of equipment met by the Learner Support Funds. Learners who are part-funded or are liable for their course fees may be eligible for support with equipment and/or uniform if they meet the eligibility criteria for Learner Support Funds (LSF). Anything over and above essential items must be paid for by the learner or applied for through the hardship element of the LSF.

Learners in receipt of an Advanced Learner Loan (A.L.L.) will have the cost of any essential kit and equipment included in their loan amount.

- **Hardship** – Funds are available to support learners with any additional course related costs such as books or IT equipment as well as in exceptional or emergency situations. Learners requiring this support can apply in writing to the Finance Department at financial.support@derwentside.ac.uk stating the reason for the claim, the support required along with the potential cost.
- **Childcare** – Learners aged 19 may be eligible for support with childcare costs through a national scheme called **Care to Learn**. Information and Application Forms are available from the Finance Department in College and on the College website. Learners aged 20+ may receive assistance with the cost of childcare through the College 20+ Childcare Scheme. Support is available for pre-school aged children who are placed with Ofsted registered providers. Funding is available for timetabled hours plus reasonable travelling time. Learners should exhaust all other funding streams i.e. those offered by the government before making an application. Further information and the 20+ Childcare Application Form are available from the Finance Department in College or the College website.
- **Learning Support** - Funds are available to make reasonable adjustments for learners who have an identified learning difficulty or disability

Learners in receipt of state benefits should inform the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) about any learner support they receive, as the DWP may decide the learner support payments will impact those benefits.

Submission of Applications

Completed Applications for Financial Assistance, Childcare Application forms and Travel claim forms along with the required supporting evidence can be submitted to:

Main Reception in College.

Email: financial.support@derwentside.ac.uk

Post: Finance Department, Derwentside College, Front Street, Consett, DH8 5EE.

Queries: via email as above or:

caroline.swainson@derwentside.ac.uk

telephone 01207 585900 ext. 956

Appeals

If a learner wishes to appeal against an unsuccessful application or a withheld payment, they can do so in writing at financial.support@derwentside.ac.uk All appeals will be considered and the learner informed of the outcome within ten working days.