

Care to Learn - Childcare Support for learners aged 16 to 19

Information for Learners and Childcare Providers 2026 to 2027

Overview

The Care to Learn Scheme (C2L) provides help with childcare costs for young parents aged under 20, allowing them to continue in education after the birth of a child. Funding is available for timetabled hours plus any reasonable travelling time as well as work/industry placements where these are a defined part of the study programme. It can also help with any additional travel costs which may be incurred when taking a child to their childcare provider. Learners can receive support up to a maximum of **£180 per week** inclusive of any travel costs. If learners are eligible for other childcare support, such as early years funding, they must use that entitlement before applying for C2L. Any additional hours required to cover their study programme can then be claimed through C2L.

1. Eligibility

Age

Learners must be aged under 20 on the day they start College. If a learner turns 20 during the academic year, they can continue to receive funding up until the end of the academic year or the end of their specific programme of study, i.e. the same programme at the same level.

Study Programme

All College full-time and part-time study programmes are eligible for C2L funding as they are funded by the Department of Education (DfE). The following programmes are **not** eligible for C2L funding:

- Apprenticeships
- Voluntary work that is not a required part of a study programme
- HE courses

Main Carer

The learner must be the main carer for the child/ren and be in receipt of Child Benefit for the child/ren for whom they are claiming C2L. The mother or father of the child can claim C2L as long as:

- The other parent is unable to provide childcare
- The other parent is not claiming childcare from any other source such as government funded early years provision

If a learner claiming C2L loses custody of their child, they must inform the College immediately.

Residency

To be eligible for C2L funding, learners must have the legal right to be resident in the UK at the start of their study programme. Exceptions to this rule apply and further details can be obtained from the College upon request.

2. Childcare Provider

C2L will only fund childcare provision that is Ofsted registered. This can be:

- A school
- Childminder
- Pre-School play group

- Out of school club

If the childcare provider is related to the child requiring care, the provider must:

- Be Ofsted registered
- At the same time be providing registered childcare for other children who are not related
- Live apart from the child

Information on local registered childcare providers can be obtained from the Families Information Service (FIS) at www.countydurhamfamilies.info

3. Applications

Applications for C2L are administered and managed by the College and available on the College website at www.derwentside.ac.uk or can be requested from the Finance Department at financial.support@derwentside.ac.uk

Learners must complete the application in full and provide evidence that they are the main carer for the child who will be funded. This can be an official letter confirming receipt of Child Benefit or a copy of the child's birth certificate.

Upon receipt of a completed application, the college will confirm eligibility, and the level of funding awarded.

4. Attendance

C2L funding can only be paid while a learner is attending their study programme, and the child is attending the childcare provider. Therefore, it is essential that learners remain engaged in their studies and aim to maintain attendance levels in-line with the College target of 90%. In the event of an absence, learners should follow the college absence procedure and provide evidence where possible. Learner and child attendance will be checked on a regular basis and learners will be contacted where attendance levels become a cause for concern.

5. Payments

The College will make payments for childcare provision direct to the childcare provider upon receipt of an invoice, and any additional travel costs, where required, direct to the learner. Payments will cease when:

- The learner stops attending their course
- The child stops attending childcare
- The learner reaches the end of their course

Payments cannot exceed the maximum award of £180 per week.

6. Complaints or Appeals

If a learner is unhappy with how their application for C2L has been managed, they should follow the College Complaints Procedure which is available on the College website at:

www.derwentside.ac.uk – About Us – College Policies/Procedures

7. Further Information

Further information regarding the C2L scheme and other childcare funding can be found at:

www.gov.uk/care-to-learn
www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

Or by contacting the College at:

Email: financial.support@derwentside.ac.uk or caroline.swainson@derwentside.ac.uk

Telephone 01207 585900 ext. 956