

Apprenticeship Care Leaver Bursary Policy 2026/27

Date established:	August 2018
Updated:	Aug 2026
Reviewed:	Annually
Purpose:	This policy aims to set out MITSkills Policy with regard to the DfE /DWP Policy for Care Leavers Bursary 2026/27

MITSkills is committed to facilitating Care Leavers entitled to claim the Apprenticeship Care Leavers' Bursary and will do so by giving all Care Leavers with the required evidence of entitlement the opportunity to apply for the Bursary (the funding of the Bursary is on the basis of appropriate evidence and DfE/DWP funding availability which can change). The Bursary is provided for 16 to 24-year-old Care Leavers based on meeting the DfE evidence requirements.

Eligible apprentices

For an apprentice to be eligible for the care leavers' bursary, they must:

- be aged under 25 at the time they start their apprenticeship.
- not have received the care leavers' bursary before.
- be either an eligible child, a relevant child or a former relevant child.

Young people should speak to their local authority personal adviser (PA) or social worker for professional advice and information about their leaving care status.

Eligible child

This is a young person who:

- is 16 or 17 years old.
- has been looked after by a UK local authority or health and social care trust for at least a period of 13 weeks since the age of 14.
- is still looked after by a UK local authority or health and social care trust.

Relevant child

This is a young person who:

- is 16 or 17 years old.
- has left care within the UK after their 16th birthday.
- was an eligible child before leaving care.

The evidence required by the DfE/DWP must be a signed official email or letter clearly **from a local authority** and signed by an appointed personal advisor confirming that the apprentice is a care leaver.

“If an apprentice wishes to claim the bursary, they must get written confirmation of their care leaver status from their local authority and pass it to the training provider. There is no specific format required for the confirmation - an email is acceptable. Providers should assist the apprentice in obtaining this where necessary.”

Due to GDPR the learner must apply for this evidence, MITSkills cannot do this for the learner.

On receipt of the appropriate evidence, MITSkills will inform apprentices if they are eligible for the bursary as a care leaver and give them the opportunity to declare that they would like to access the funding. This will be signed declaration by the apprentice, and allow the apprentice to confirm that they:

- a) Understand that they are eligible for and would like to receive a bursary as a care leaver.
- b) Understand that if they have been found to have accepted the payment incorrectly or if they are ineligible then the government will require it to be repaid.
- c) Have not been paid a care leavers' bursary before.

This only includes the care leavers bursary paid by the DfE/DWP; other local incentives do not apply.

This is a one-off payment. An eligible apprentice must only receive this payment once. An individual must not receive this funding again if they progress or start another apprentice. The apprentice must declare they have not received this payment previously before MITSkills pass it on. The DfE/DWP will also monitor this to ensure that the apprentice receives this payment only once and may reclaim duplicate payments.

MITSkills includes signed consent from the apprentice to inform their employer that they have been in the care of their local authority and tell the apprentice that their declaration will be used to generate additional payments to both the main provider and their employer to support their transition into work.

Where a 19 to 24-year-old apprentice does not want to inform their employer that they were previously in care, then MITSkills must report the appropriate code in the ILR. This will generate the funding for MITSkills as the Training Provider and the apprentice but not the employer. This means that MITSkills should not record the code for the waiver in the ILR.

The bursary payment will be paid in three instalments over the first year for each care leaver in the eligible age range, when they start an apprenticeship on or after 1 August 2026. Once instalments are generated, MITSkills will pass this on in full to the apprentice within 30 days of receiving this funding from the DfE.

- 60 days after the apprentice starts, £1,000 will be paid if the apprentice is still undertaking their apprenticeship.
- 120 days after the apprentice starts, £1,000 will be paid if the apprentice is still undertaking their apprenticeship.
- 300 days after the apprentice starts, £1,000 will be paid if the apprentice is still undertaking their apprenticeship.

The apprentice will be required to evidence they have received each instalment of the bursary payment. This must be a signed confirmation from the apprentice and not a receipt of transaction.

To the Learner/Apprentice

You do not have to declare you are a care leaver to your employer and we have allowed for this in the sign-up pack. You do, however, have to complete a declaration and provide appropriate evidence to us prior to sign-up. We supply a copy of the form on our website, or you can ask at sign up for our staff to help you complete the process.

Complete the forms carefully, making sure you complete all of the sections. You also need to make sure you provide us with **photocopies** of the evidence we have asked for. Please note we prefer you not to send originals; **if you send originals**, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to return these to you.

You should hand in or send your completed application form and evidence to the assessor handling your signups and retain a copy for yourself; or you can send it by secure post (which is advised where you have not completed the form on the day of sign up).

Postal Applications

If you are sending your application by letter with evidence using the check list and giving completed bank details form and evidence by post, you may want, and we advise you send your letter tracked (e.g., to get a free Proof of Posting Certificate and/or send by recorded delivery). MITSkills cannot accept responsibility for postal applications not received. Send by letter to the address below.

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