

Student Services

NHS Learning Support Fund



**Financial support for
healthcare students 2020/21**
NHS Learning Support Fund
guidance



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Disclaimer

New and prospective students should not rely on the arrangements described in this guide when planning for subsequent academic years as these may be subject to review in the future and as a result may be liable to change.

Information about the NHS Learning Support Fund is available on the Student Services website. Students are advised to check the website on a regular basis.

The Department of Health and Social Care and the NHSBSA Student Services will not accept responsibility for loss of any type suffered by students who have relied on current rules and allowances whether for the current academic year, academic year to begin or for subsequent academic years.

Policy

The full rules and conditions applying to the NHS Learning Support Fund for 2020/21 are available on [our website](#).

Who is this guide for?

The information in this guide applies to new and continuing nursing, midwifery and allied health professional students who are:

- attending a higher education institution in England
- actively in study, whether academic or practice learning
- eligible for student maintenance and tuition fee loan support from the Student Loans Company and;
- in attendance on a specified date depending on their start month.

Students who are not eligible for the NHS Learning Support Fund

- Healthcare students who are eligible for an NHS Bursary in 2020/21 are not eligible to apply to the NHS Learning Support Fund (NHS LSF).
- Students attending their course on secondment terms or as a Nursing Associate, where they remain employed by an organisation but are relieved of their normal duties and given leave of absence to enable them to attend the course, are also not eligible for any NHS LSF allowances.

1. What is the NHS Learning Support Fund?

The NHS Learning Support Fund (NHS LSF) provides supplementary funding for eligible pre-registration healthcare students in receipt of a student loan.

The NHS LSF is administered by the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) Student Services.

From 1 September 2020 the NHS LSF has been extended to include a Training Grant and additional Parental Support which will replace the current Child Dependants Allowance.

The NHS LSF is made up of six elements of supplementary funding. These are:



Training Grant

£5,000 per year academic for all new and continuing students



Specialist subject payment

£1,000 for all new students studying a specialist subject. Further details are given later in this guide.



Regional incentive

Further details about this allowance will be made available in due course.



Parental Support

New and continuing students with child dependants will have access to £2,000 per academic year.



Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses

Reimbursement of additional travel and any temporary accommodation costs incurred as a result of attending a practice placement.



Exceptional Hardship Fund

Up to £3,000 per academic year for students who find themselves in unforeseen financial hardship.

NHS Learning Support Fund

Training
Grant

Parental
Support

Travel and
Dual
Accommodation
Expenses

Exceptional
Support
Fund

Am I eligible to apply?

To apply for any of the NHS LSF allowances, you must meet **all** the criteria detailed below. In addition, each of the allowances has its own specific requirements which are explained in more detail further on in this guidance.

You must be in attendance on one of the following healthcare courses at a university in England:



Students on paramedic courses

New and continuing students attending paramedic science degree courses that lead to registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) can apply for NHS LSF from September 2020.

Only students studying undergraduate or postgraduate degree level courses, including bachelors and master's courses, can apply for NHS LSF.

Paramedic DipHE and foundation degree courses are not eligible for NHS LSF.

Students studying paramedicine as a second degree will only be eligible for NHS LSF if they meet the student loan eligibility requirement set out on page 7.

¹ With the exception of students who started courses between 1 August 2018 and 31 July 2019 at The UCL Eastman Dental Institute, Kings College London, The Greater Manchester School for Dental Care Professionals, The University of Birmingham (in partnership with Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS) and Bristol Dental School.

Student loan eligibility

Applicants for any of the NHS LSF allowances must be eligible for tuition fee **and** maintenance loan support from the Student Loans Company (SLC).²

When you make an application, you will be asked to provide your current student loan award notification³ to show that you meet their eligibility criteria. The student loan award letter must be relevant to the academic year for which you are applying for NHS LSF.

Exception to student loan requirement

Students who choose not to claim a student loan for personal reasons may still be eligible to access the NHS LSF; however, their eligibility will be assessed on a case by case basis.

Students will be required to demonstrate that they meet the eligibility criteria defined by either SFE, SFW, SFNI or SAAS, if they had chosen to apply for a student loan.

General eligibility requirements

Residency

You must meet the eligibility criteria defined by one of the following (depending on which UK country you are normally resident):

- [Student Finance England \(SFE\)](#)
- [Student Finance Wales \(SFW\)](#)
- [The Student Awards Agency for Scotland \(SAAS\) or](#)
- [Student Finance Northern Ireland \(SFNI\)](#)

In most cases, this will be demonstrated when you apply for NHS LSF as you will be asked to provide your most recent student loan award notification.

How do I apply for the NHS LSF allowances?

You should register for an online account via the NHS Learning Support Fund application system, which you can access from our website.

You can do this at any point during your course, you do not have to be in your first year of study to register, but please be aware there is a nine month application deadline applicable for each academic year.

Please note that registering for an NHS LSF account is not a guarantee that you will receive any of the allowances. You must meet the eligibility criteria outlined in this guide and your personal eligibility will not be fully determined until you actively submit an application.

The NHS LSF allowances are supplementary funding only and you should not base your financial plans for the academic year on receiving any them.

² 'The Student Loans Company covers Student Finance England (SFE), Student Finance Wales (SFW), Student Finance Northern Ireland (SFNI), or the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS), depending on your usual place of residence in the UK.

³ Issued by SFE, SFW, SAAS or SFNI.

2. The Training Grant



If you are attending one of the courses listed in Section 1 and you are an eligible new or continuing student from 1 September 2020 you can apply for the Training Grant.

The Training Grant is a payment of £5,000 per academic year to help with maintenance and associated study costs.

Your student loan entitlement will not be affected if you receive this grant. The Training Grant is not means tested and won't affect any student loan payments you may be receiving.

If you are in receipt of any social security benefits you should check your position with the relevant agency.

When can I start to receive the Training Grant?

The Training Grant is available from 1 September 2020 onwards, according to when your new academic year commences. The application window for students on Autumn cohorts will open from July 2020.

Students will only be able to receive Training Grant payments from the start of their next full academic year after 1 September 2020. For example, if you started your course in January 2020 you will not be able to apply for the Training Grant until you start your second year of training in January 2021.

New academic year commences between:	Training Grant available from:
1 September and 31 December 2020	September 2020
1 January to 31 August 2021	Relevant course start month

Existing students whose next academic year commences from January 2020 onwards should continue to apply for elements of NHS LSF using their **current LSF online account** until they become eligible for the new package.

Payment

Training Grant payments will be paid in three instalments over the academic year and will intermit with termly student loan payments. This is to provide you with a consistent flow of funding throughout the academic year as far as possible.

If your academic year commences in Autumn 2020, Training Grant payments will be credited to your bank account in November 2020 and February and May 2021.

You must be in attendance on a specific date to receive Training Grant payments. These will not be released to you until we receive confirmation of attendance from your university.

The relevant dates of attendance are as follows:

Academic year start month	You must be in active study on
September/October 2020	1 November 2020
January / February 2021	1 March 2021
March / April 2021	1 May 2021

You will be required to reapply for the Training Grant each academic year of your course.

Part-time students

If you are attending your course on a part-time basis, you will receive the Training Grant pro rata of the full-time amount, depending on your attendance pattern.

Part-time course attendance	% of full-time rate
Over four years	75% - £3750 per academic year
Over five years	60% - £3000 per academic year
Over six years	50% - £2500 per academic year

This will be paid in instalments over three terms per academic year, the same as for full-time students.

If you leave university or transfer to a course that is not eligible

You must inform us as soon as possible if you stop attending your course for any reason.

When we receive notification we will stop any further installments of the Training Grant which may have been due to you in the current academic year, and will work out if you are owed any payment or part-payment or whether an overpayment has occurred.

If you transfer to a course that is not eligible for NHS LSF, you will no longer be entitled to any payments and these will be stopped from the date you transfer.

If you are overpaid, we will contact you to advise of the amount and how to repay it.

The sooner you let us know that you are no longer attending your course, the sooner we can take action to help prevent overpayment.



3. Additional funding



Specialist subject payments

From September 2020 eligible new students studying one of the specialist subjects below will receive an additional £1,000 on top of the Training Grant.

Students starting on or after 1 September 2020 only:

- Mental Health Nursing
- Learning Disability Nursing
- Radiography (Diagnostic and Therapeutic)
- Prosthetics and Orthotics
- Orthoptics
- Podiatry

Students on a dual course that incorporates one of the above will also be eligible for the specialist subject payment.

If you are eligible for the additional £1,000 this will be automatically applied when you make a successful application for the Training Grant.

It will be paid to you in termly instalments at the same time as the Training Grant throughout the academic year for the duration of your course as long as you reapply each academic year.

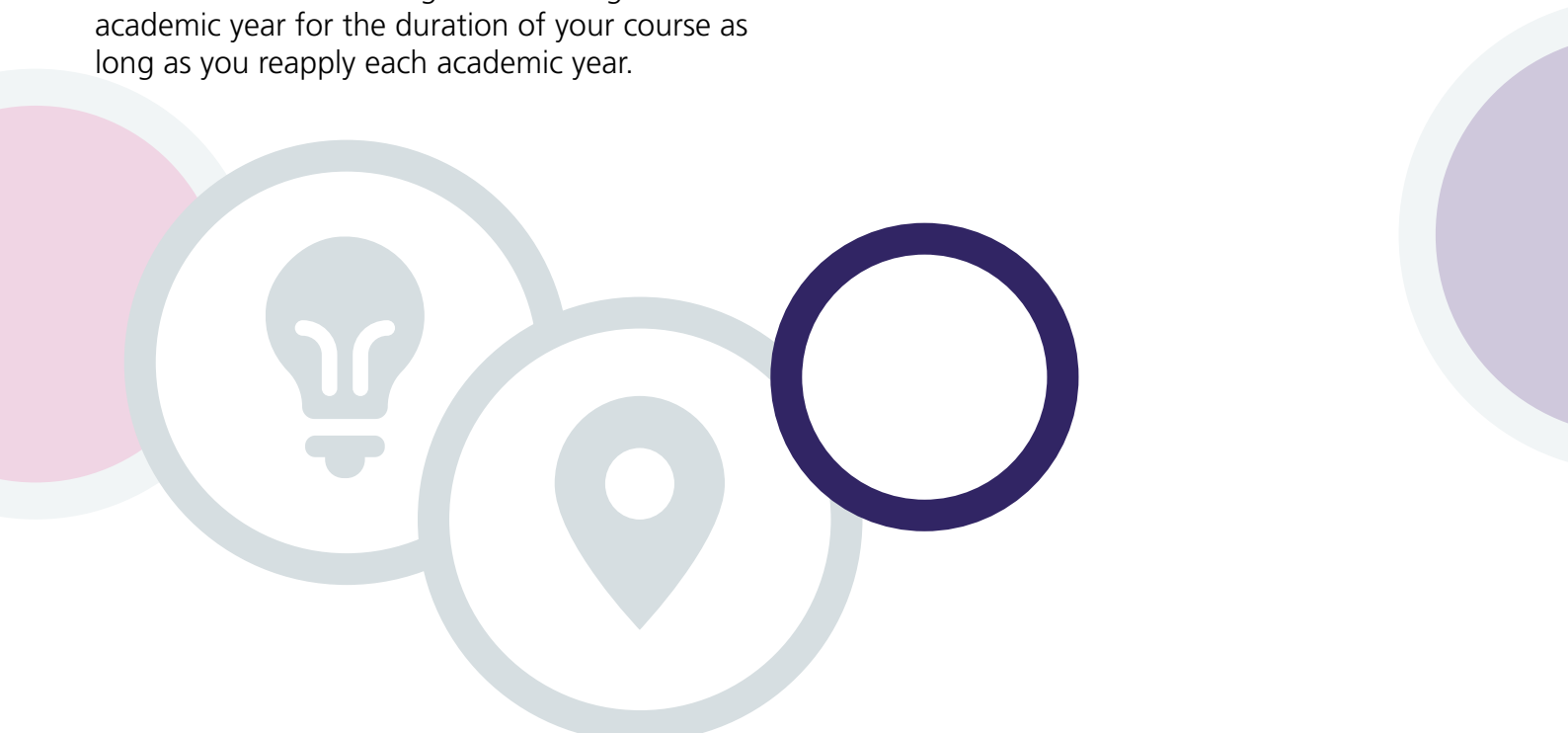
Regional payments

This will apply to new students commencing an eligible healthcare course on or after 1 September 2020. Further details will be published in due course.

If you withdraw or transfer from or to another course

If you are not originally on one of the courses identified as being either a shortage profession or in a designated region, but you later transfer onto a course which is, you will be entitled to the additional amount(s) as applicable from the actual date you transfer.

If you withdraw from your course or you transfer to another eligible healthcare course that is not a specialist subject or in a designated region, you will no longer receive the additional payment(s). These will be stopped from the date you withdraw or transfer.



4. Parental Support (formerly Child Dependents Allowance)



From September 2020, eligible new and continuing students with childcare responsibilities for one or more children will receive a £2,000 Parental Support payment. This is to ensure that students can continue to study and attend practice placements. Parental Support replaces the £1,000 Child Dependents Allowance (CDA) previously available.

This grant does not affect your access to childcare support and other means of funding available through the higher education support system or other sources.

Part-time students

Eligible students studying on a part-time basis will receive a pro rata amount of the £2,000. Typical amounts are set out below:

Length of your part-time course	Parental Support amount per academic year
Four years	£1,500
Five years	£1,200
Six years	£1,000

Eligibility

You must:

- meet all the general eligibility criteria at Section 1 of this guide; and
- have parental responsibility for a child who is under 15 years of age, or under 17 years of age if the child is registered with special educational needs⁴.

If you are eligible, you can claim Parental Support regardless of the number of dependent children you are responsible for.

⁴Within the meaning of section 20 of the Children and Families Act 2014. A child or young person has special educational needs within the meaning of the Act if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

Application and payment

Parental Support is available from the start of your next full academic year which falls on or after 1 September 2020. Application and payment arrangements are the same as for the Training Grant. **See Section 2** of this guide for further information.

Child Dependants Allowance

If you are an existing student who was previously in receipt of CDA your payments will continue until the start of your next academic year after which point you will transfer to the new funding.

When you make an application for the Training Grant, you will be able to apply for Parental Support at the same time.

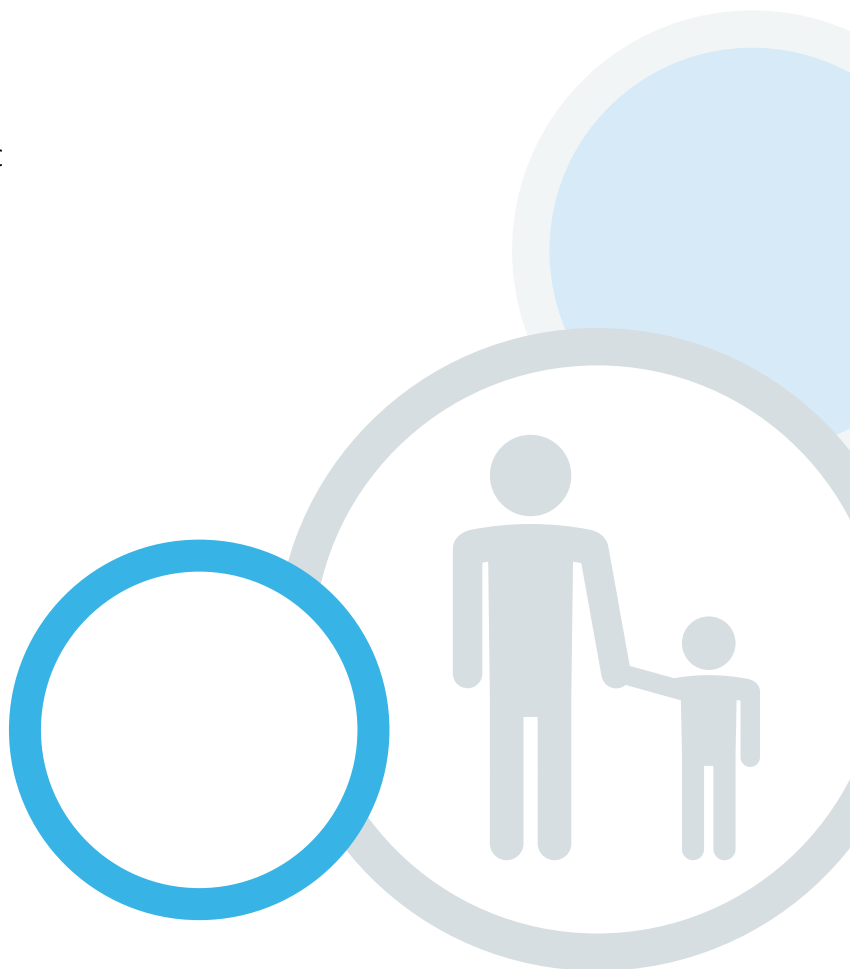
If you are eligible for both allowances, your payments will be made together on the same payment dates in three termly instalments throughout your academic year.

You must claim Parental Support within nine months of the first day of the current academic year of your course.

If you leave your course

You **must** inform us as soon as possible if you stop attending your course for any reason. When we receive notification we will stop any further instalments of CDA or Parental Support which may have been due to you in the current academic year, and will work out if you are owed any payment or part-payment or whether an overpayment has occurred.

If you are overpaid, we will contact you to advise of the amount and how to repay it. **The sooner you let us know that you are no longer attending your course, the sooner we can take action to help prevent overpayment.**



5. Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses (TDAE)



Students who meet the general eligibility criteria in **Section 1** are entitled to have some of the additional costs of attending a practice placement reimbursed, provided a valid claim is made within nine months of the cost being incurred.

How do I claim reimbursement of TDAE?

If your next academic year starts from:

September to December 2020 - you can claim TDAE by accessing the claim form through your online account.

January to August 2021 - you should continue to claim TDAE through your existing LSF account until your next academic year starts.

Our guidance booklet [Completing your TDAE claim – a guide for students and universities](#) is available to guide you through this process. You are strongly advised to refer to the guide when completing your claim to ensure you provide the correct information on your claim form.

We will arrange payment to you within 20 working days of receiving your form. Payment will be made via the bank account you nominated when you registered your NHS LSF account.

What can I claim?

Travel costs

You can claim reimbursement of some of your expenses for travel to practice placement for costs incurred over and above your usual daily travel costs to attend university. Below are examples of how excess travel is determined.

Example 1

Student A's travel costs are as follows:

Journey	Cost of daily return journey
Travel from term time address to university/normal place of study :	£5.75
Travel from term time address to practice placement site	£9.00

Student A can claim reimbursement of £3.25 per day (£9.00 less £5.75) via TDAE towards their placement travel costs for the duration of this placement. This is because their placement travel costs are in excess of their normal daily travel to and from university.

Example 2

Student B's travel costs are as follows:

Journey	Cost of daily return journey
Travel from term time address to university/normal place of study :	£10.00
Travel from term time address to practice placement site	£8.50

Student B cannot claim reimbursement via TDAE towards their placement travel costs for this particular placement. This is because it does not cost them an excess amount to travel to their placement site when compared to their normal daily return travel to university⁵.

⁵ If Student B is later required to attend another placement during the academic year and their daily travel costs for that placement were in excess of their normal daily travel to university, they would then be able to receive reimbursement for the new claim.

TDAE maximum rates 2020/21

Cost	Claim limited to
Public transport	Actual cost
Travel in or on the student's own vehicle	
Pedal Cycle	20p per mile
Motor vehicle	28p per mile
Parking, Tolls and Ferries	Actual cost

Temporary placement accommodation

As part of the TDAE arrangements, you may be able to claim the cost of taking **temporary accommodation** near to your practice placement site if it is not possible or practical for you to travel there from your normal term time address on a daily basis.

If you move to your parental home for the purpose of attending your placement, reimbursement of accommodation costs will not be available to you, but you may still be able to claim the cost of one weekly return journey between the temporary accommodation and your normal term time address.

Placement accommodation rates

Commercial accommodation	Non-commercial accommodation
Up to £55 per night	Up to £25 per night

If you are required to stay in temporary accommodation whilst you attend your placement, you may also claim for travel costs as follows:

- any excess cost arising from one weekly return journey between your normal term time accommodation and your temporary placement accommodation, (as described in the example below) **and;**

- any excess cost arising from daily travel between your temporary placement accommodation and your practice placement site. Your placement travel costs must still be in excess of normal daily travel to university

Overseas placements

If you are required to attend a part of your course outside the United Kingdom you may be reimbursed for some of your additional costs to travel to your placement site, providing these:

- have been necessarily incurred (either within or outside the UK) **and;**

- are in excess of the normal daily return cost of travel between your normal term-time accommodation and your university.

In addition, essential associated costs for accommodation, medical insurance, tests and any fees for visas may also be reimbursed to you.

6. Exceptional Support Fund (ESF)



What is the ESF?

This is a grant intended to assist students who experience unforeseen financial hardship during their course.

The income available to you, as well as your day to day expenses will be used in the ESF assessment, along with that of your partner, if you have one.

The following types of income and expenses are considered in the ESF assessment:

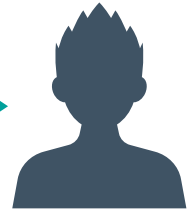
- Student support from the government for higher education, including your student maintenance loan, tuition fee loan and other allowances such as a Childcare Grant or Adult Dependents Grant⁶
- The income available to you and/or others members of your family if you live with a partner and/or any children
- Income you may receive as an individual, such as part-time or casual employment, means tested benefits, contributions from parents, savings etc.
- Essential expenditure, which includes rent or mortgage payments, travel costs, council tax, regular medication, loan payments and priority debts.

⁶ If you are eligible, but have chosen not to apply for a student loan (tuition fees and maintenance) and you decide to claim ESF, you will be asked to demonstrate what alternative financial provisions you have made in order to undertake your course without student support. Students are expected to have made provision for their basic living costs and their tuition fees before commencing their studies.

Who can apply?

To be eligible for assistance from the ESF you must:

be an **eligible student** under the general criteria set out in Section 1 of this guide.



demonstrate that there is a shortfall between your income and expenditure, which you are unable to manage by your own actions.



demonstrate that you have exhausted all other available avenues of funding support, including student loans, benefits and university funds, including hardship.



have received at least your first term's Student Loan payment, where applicable.



What is not covered under the ESF?

We cannot award ESF funds to:

cover emergency payments, for example repairs to essential household equipment, replacing stolen items or non-routine car repairs.



help meet the costs of your course tuition fees if you are eligible for, but have not taken out, a tuition fee loan.



substitute funds where there is evidence of money mismanagement, such as overspending on holidays, gym memberships, luxury items, gambling, etc.



make good a default in any assessed contribution to a student loan by a parent, spouse, civil partner or partner.



meet a **temporary** shortfall in your income, such as where you are waiting for payment of a maintenance award, university hardship funds, reimbursement of travel expenses or a bridging loan.



How much is available?

We can award **up to** a maximum of £3,000 per academic year. Students can apply for ESF more than once within an academic year if they are still experiencing financial hardship and they have not already been awarded the maximum amount. You can also apply again in subsequent academic years, regardless of whether you have applied or received anything previously.

When can I apply?

If your next academic year starts from:

September to December 2020 - you can claim ESF by accessing the claim form through your online account.

January to August 2021 - you should continue to claim for the ESF on the existing LSF application system until your next academic year starts and you transfer to the new system. During this period, you will still need to enclose a copy of your LSF student coversheet with your ESF form.

You can make an ESF application at any point during your academic year, providing you have received at least your first term's instalment of your student loan, where applicable.

Not all applications are successful and we cannot guarantee you will be awarded a payment. However, students can apply for ESF more than once within an academic year, if they believe they are still experiencing financial hardship or if they received a payment previously but were not awarded the maximum amount.

What evidence will I need to provide?

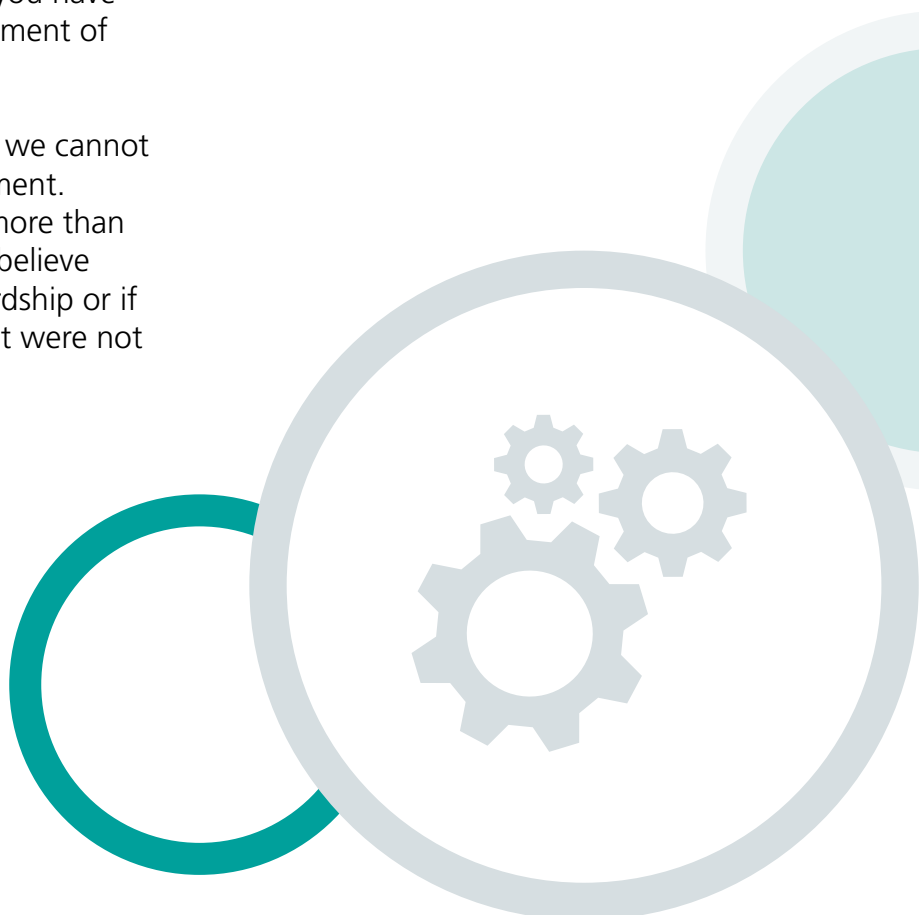
All ESF applicants are asked to send their last three months bank statements in support of their claim.

Depending on the financial information you provide when you make a claim, you may also need to provide other supporting documentation in addition to your bank statements. Information about what to send is detailed on the ESF claim form itself. Further information on **making an ESF claim can be found on our website.**

Your university must authorise your form to confirm you have applied for their hardship support first.

Payment

If your application for ESF is successful we will contact you by email to notify you how much you have been awarded. Payment will normally be made in a lump sum within 15 days. You can log into your NHS LSF account to see when the payment will be made to you.



7. Changes to your circumstances

If your circumstances change in any way that may affect your eligibility for any of the NHS LSF allowances, or you are unsure, you should seek advice from us as soon as possible.

Changes that might affect your NHS LSF entitlement and which you **must** tell us about can include:

Reason for the change	Additional information
Withdrawal from your course	We would need to know whether this was temporary or permanent withdrawal and the last date you attended your course.
Transfer to any other course at the same or a different university	We would need to determine whether your new course was eligible for NHS LSF.
Interruption to training due to maternity or adoption	Students who are on an authorised period of maternity or adoption leave from their course may be considered for continued payments of the Training Grant, Parental Support and the Exceptional Support Fund up to the last day of the term in which the student started their authorised period of leave. No further payments of NHS LSF will be made until the student returns to their course.
Illness or injury	Students may continue to receive their existing NHS LSF allowances for periods of authorised absence due to a medically certified illness or injury of up to 60 days in an academic year.
Requiring an extension or extra time to complete your course	If you cannot complete your course in the time normally required NHS LSF provisions and any payments may be extended for up to 12 months to allow you to complete your training , providing you continue to meet the general NHS LSF eligibility criteria.
You are in receipt of CDA or Parental Support but cease to have parental responsibility.	You would no longer be entitled to CDA or Parental Support, so your payments would need to be stopped from the next available term.
A change to your personal contact details	Please log on to your NHS LSF account and update your details as soon as possible.
A change to your bank account details	As above.



Fraud

If you knowingly withhold information, or provide false information, in order to receive more funding than you are entitled to, you will be committing fraud. If at any time we suspect that a claim is fraudulent a referral will be made to our Local Counter Fraud Specialists for further investigation.

Students are reminded that if they commit fraud, and it is found at a later date, as well as repaying any NHS LSF payments, they may be removed from the register by their professional body.

Reporting suspected fraud

If you suspect that someone may be claiming funding support from the NHS LSF fraudulently, you can use the Freephone NHS Fraud and Corruption Reporting Line (FCRL) to pass on information anonymously. All calls are treated in confidence and investigated by professionally trained staff. Alternatively, you can report suspected fraud online anonymously at <https://cfa.nhs.uk/reportfraud>

If a person is found to be guilty of fraud following an investigation, they may be liable to prosecution and/or civil proceedings.



8. NHS LSF reviews and appeals

Scenario	First step	Next steps
<p>If you are concerned about the way in which your NHS LSF application or payment has been dealt with.</p>	<p>Contact us by telephone, text relay service or online form.</p> <p>Our full contact details can be found at www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/learning-support-fund/contact-us</p>	<p>If you remain dissatisfied, you may make a written complaint to us, under the <i>NHSBSA's complaints handling policy</i> by email: nhsbsa.lsfcomplaints@nhs.net</p> <p>Or by post: The Review Section NHSBSA Student Services Hesketh House 200-220 Broadway Fleetwood FY7 8SS</p>
<p>If you disagree with the actual outcome of your NHS LSF application</p> <p>(For example, you disagree with the decision on the amount of funding payable, or you believe your funding has been incorrectly suspended, reduced or terminated without good reason)</p>	<p>Request a review by writing to:</p> <p>The Review Section NHSBSA Student Services Hesketh House 200-220 Broadway Fleetwood FY7 8SS</p> <p>Or email: nhsbsa.lsfcomplaints@nhs.net</p> <p>This should normally be requested within 28 days of receiving the initial decision.</p>	<p>If after being informed of the result of the review you still believe the decision we have made in relation to your Learning Support Fund award is incorrect, you can appeal to the Department of Health and Social Care. This must be done within 28 days of receiving the NHSBSA's decision.</p> <p>Write to: Amanda Shaw NHS Learning Support Fund Appeal Health & Social Care Workforce Strategy Quarry House Quarry Hill LEEDS LS2 7UE</p>