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Headteacher
TA Team Leader

Fiona Denny
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Workforce Development Team
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Your Ref:
Our Ref: FDSA
Date: 27th April 2009

Dear Colleague

FUNDING FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF

Over the last 4 years the Local Authority has provided a range of bursaries and financial support to help reduce the costs of undertaking qualifications. A large number of colleagues have benefited from this and have been successful in achieving a wide range of qualifications from NVQs to single subject AS levels to Foundation Degrees and Masters Modules.

This year the monies that we can put to support this activity are further reduced and it is vital that we build on the support that already exists. There are a range of other initiatives to support colleagues in the work place who wish to achieve an accredited qualification - particularly Train to Gain – and we are keen to add value to this work.

The Suffolk Children's Trust has also recently approved a set of Core Value Statements to support the vision of integrated working and our activity needs to reflect and support these principles. In particular we are focusing on the value 'We learn together so as to work better together'.

For these reasons the funding we have available will be used in two ways:

- (1) to support groups of learners coming together in their local community and accessing Train to Gain funding
- (2) to support individuals in achieving qualifications where they are unable to access support through other means.

Priority will be given to applications made under (1) above.

You may also be aware that the Early Years and Childcare Team have, in the past, been able to offer support for those working in the Foundation Stage who wish to take Foundation Degrees. The contact to discuss these funding options is: Pauline Morgan (email: pauline.morgan@socserv.suffolkcc.gov.uk)

Further details on each of the priorities and application forms are given below.

As always if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Liz Meadows the new Workforce Adviser with responsibility for Support Staff. Her details are given at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely



Fiona Denny, County Adviser Professional Development

Priority One: support groups of learners coming together in their local community and accessing Train to Gain funding

Under this model we would encourage local schools to look at running NVQ or other accredited programmes in for school support staff in their local communities.

Whilst we are open to suggestions, a model that has worked elsewhere in Suffolk is as follows:

- A school or group of schools works in partnership with a Training Provider (usually a local college or private provider such as the YMCA, ABA, NVQ Consortium)
- A group (minimum 8) support staff who wish to undertake the same qualification meet together on a regular basis at a local school (perhaps once every 3 weeks). These sessions involve direct input from experts on topics that form part of their qualification. It is also an opportunity to exchange ideas and provide mutual support.
- The group can focus on any qualification at NVQ 2 or 3 (or equivalent) eg Supporting Teaching and Learning NVQ 2/NVQ 3, Child Care, Learning and Development NVQ 2/3, Learning Development and Support Services NVQ 3, Playwork NVQ 2/3, Customer Service NVQ 2/NVQ3, Administration NVQ2/NVQ3, Level 3 Introductory Team Leading Award etc
- Each trainee is also given their own assessor who works with them on an individual basis to plan which units of their NVQ they wish to take and what opportunities to gather evidence they have and what new experience or knowledge they need to acquire.

Advantages

- Delivery and accreditation of the NVQ takes place entirely within the individual's travel to work area.
- Workshop sessions are delivered by local experts drawn from the participating schools and add specific contextual detail to discussion of concepts and challenges
- The groups provide mutual support and encouragement
- Participants and their schools are modelling a real commitment to the idea of a learning community
- Development opportunities for experienced staff to deliver workshops to colleagues and to train as NVQ assessors.

Commitment by the school(s) as a minimum

- To recruit participants to the group to ensure the group is viable
- To identify a lead co-ordinator or steering group to liaise direct with the Training Provider
- To work with the Training Provider to agree a series of relevant workshops that will provide underpinning knowledge and to draw on the expertise from within their schools to deliver those workshops
- To ensure the participants have release time to attend the workshops

Additionally schools may have experienced staff members (both teaching and support staff) who would wish to train as NVQ Assessors and work alongside the peripatetic assessors employed direct by the Training Provider

Time required

Typically an NVQ 2 programme may run over 6 months and an NVQ 3 programme over a year. However much depends on the individuals participating in the programme and their capacity.

For the individuals – an NVQ unit may take on average 6 hours to prepare for. There are typically 6 units in an NVQ 2 and 10 units in an NVQ 3.

Interested – what next?

If this is a model you are actively interested in exploring you should check there is sufficient interest to make a viable group and identify the NVQ or area of work where colleagues are seeking accreditation.

Once you feel reasonably sure there is sufficient interest within your school/pyramid/cluster you will need to make contact with a Train to Gain training provider offering the qualification at the levels you are hoping to work towards. They will be able to give you some idea of costs – what can be subsidised through the Train to Gain initiative and what extra will be needed. Depending on overall costs, the Local Authority may be able to help you make up part or all of the shortfall.

The person to contact initially is Gerald Bark, tchc, Train to Gain for the Eastern Region who will be able to discuss your needs and put you in touch with an appropriate provider.

tchc
No 1
Marlin's Meadow
Croxley Green Business Park
Watford
WD18 8YA

gerald.bark@tchc.net

01923 698430
07875 460992

Once you feel you have more clarity around your needs, likely numbers and costs, then please contact me direct - Liz Meadows (liz.meadows@suffolk.gov.uk) or telephone 01473 264693 to discuss subsidies. I will be reserving funds which can be accessed up to December 2009. Clearly there is a limit to the support available and monies will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

(2) Support for individuals wishing to undertake qualifications where they are unable to access funding elsewhere.

Further Education (up to Level 3 – Advanced Level - programmes)

As with last year I am very keen that my limited funding adds to rather than replaces any available subsidy. So this year (2009/2010) I am offering funding of up to 70% for course fees (including registration and assessment). This will be paid in two instalments. Half at the beginning of a programme and half on completion or proof of satisfactory progress if the course is for more than one year.

The offer applies to **ANY qualification on the National Database of Accredited Qualifications taken within or outside Suffolk** where the individual is not entitled to a subsidy from another source. Where the individual is entitled to some help, I am happy to consider an application to support the unsubsidised portion of fees. Please note that the exception to this is the Certificate in School Administration where participants already automatically have an opportunity for reduced fees funded from the same budget.

Whilst the qualification does have to be on the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) framework this is very broad and includes most of the qualifications offered by colleges although it does not include private courses (e.g. ICT vendor certificates)
<http://www.openquals.org.uk/openquals/SimpleSearch.aspx?nav=key>

Please note that this opportunity is available to **any member of support staff** employed by the school. In addition I have reserved up to 5 bursaries for colleagues who are volunteering in a school if they have the backing of the headteacher.

I have provided in Appendix One, some examples of qualifications which colleagues may wish to consider and are available locally. I have also given the website addresses of some of the local providers. However this list is indicative and not exhaustive.

There are limits to the funds I have available and I anticipate that demand may exceed supply. Consequently whilst applicants are free to apply for support at any time of the year, I will consider the first batch of applications received by Friday 3 July 2009. Anyone applying before Friday 3 July 2009 will be informed of the outcome of their application by the end of the summer term.

I will only consider applications beyond that date if there is funding available to do so.

All applicants for funding should have checked whether help is available through other sources before applying and we will be asking applicants to give permission for the training provider to release information on their progress.

Please note that this funding is only available for 2009/2010 and we cannot guarantee continued funding in subsequent years so it is important to check how long the course lasts and the cost in each year. All subsidies will be for the 2009-2010 year only.

Once we have allocated monies, we will then ask for confirmation of the fees before transferring funds to the school. It will then be up to the school/individual to pay the training provider themselves.

If you have a member of staff who is interested in applying for funding, please ask them to complete the FE Application for **Funding Form at Appendix Two**.

Criteria for assessing applications

We will look at the overall quality of the application and in particular the response to the question: "How will this qualification benefit the pupils and the school" to help decide who receives funding.

We will look at the level of support the school is prepared to offer the candidate and its statement of support for the candidate.

If an individual has already completed one year of a course of 2 years or more and can provide evidence of good progress, subject to the criteria above, they will receive priority. Whilst we will cross reference it is your responsibility to let us know whether you are seeking funding for the 2nd year of a programme.

Subject to the above, individuals who have not received funding before will generally be considered before those who have received support. This does not include colleagues who have been funded for Higher Level Teaching Assistant status.

Please note that funding to a maximum of 70% will be offered. Individuals who have already received funding for qualifications and wish to take a new course may be offered less than 70%.

Higher Education (Level 4 and above)

The reduction in funding for bursaries has meant some hard choices. One of the decisions we have made is that anyone entitled to a student grant/loan by virtue of undertaking an HE programme designated as full time will not be entitled to apply for a subsidy. *Please note that this is a change to the policy of last year.*

I am able to offer bursaries of up to 50% of tuition fees or £700 whichever is the lesser amount for any higher education qualifications (undergraduate or postgraduate) or other Level 4+ qualification on the QCA framework delivered through a college of further and higher education or at universities within or outside Suffolk. This will include the Open University.
<http://www.openquals.org.uk/openquals/SimpleSearch.aspx?nav=key>

Again applicants for funding will be expected to have checked with the college/university, the student loans company (for those planning to take full time HE programmes) and Suffolk County Council Early Years team (for those working in the Early Years Foundation Stage or as a Playworker) what support is available for them through other sources before applying. We will also ask applicants to give permission for us the college/university to release information on progress.

Anyone on the second or subsequent year of a programme will be expected to provide confirmation of satisfactory progress.

Please note that this funding is only available for 2009/2010 and we cannot guarantee continued funding in subsequent years.

Funding will be paid in two instalments. Half at the beginning of a programme and half on completion or proof of satisfactory progress if the course is for more than one year.

Once we have allocated monies, we will then ask for confirmation of the fees before transferring funds to the school.

As with the Further Education applications, there are limits to the funds I have available and I anticipate that demand may exceed supply. Consequently whilst applicants are free to apply for support at any time of the year, I will consider the first batch of applications received by Friday 3 July 2009. Anyone applying before Friday 3 July 2009 will be informed of the outcome of their application by the end of the summer term.

I will only consider applications beyond that date if there is funding available to do so. Anyone applying before Friday 3 July 2009 will be informed of the outcome of their application by the end of term.

If you have a member of staff interested in applying for funding, please ask them to complete the HE Application for **Funding Form at Appendix Three.**

Criteria for assessing applications

We will look at the overall quality of the application and in particular the response to the question: "How will this qualification benefit the pupils and the school" to help decide who receives funding.

We will look at the level of support the school is prepared to offer the candidate and its statement of support for the candidate.

If an individual has already completed one year of a course of 2 years or more and can provide evidence of good progress, subject to the criteria above, they will receive priority

Subject to the above criteria, individuals who have not received funding before will be considered before those who have received support. This does not include colleagues who have been funded for Higher Level Teaching Assistant status.

Please note that funding to a maximum of £700 or 50% of course fees will be offered. Individuals who have already received funding for qualifications and wish to take a new course may be offered less than 50%.

Appendix One

Lowestoft College – www.lowestoft.ac.uk

Support Work in Schools Levels 2 and 3
Classroom Teaching Assistant Award – Level 2 and Level 3
Supporting Teaching and Learning NVQ – Level 2 and Level 3
A1 NVQ Assessor Award
Childcare Learning and Development NVQ – Level 2 and Level 3
Administration NVQ – Level 2 and Level 3
ILM First Line Management – Level 3
Food Preparation and Cookery NVQ – Levels 1 – 3
Support Work in Schools – Level 2 and Level 3

Otley College – www.otleycollege.ac.uk

Cleaning and Support Services NVQ 1 and NVQ 2
Customer Service NVQ 2
Team Leading NVQ 2
Amenity Horticulture NVQ 2 and NVQ 3

Suffolk New College – www.suffolk.ac.uk

Support Work in Schools – Level 2 and Level 3
A1 NVQ Assessor Award
V1 Verifier Award
Certificate in Childcare and Education – Level 2
Catering and Hospitality NVQ – 1 – 3
Association of Accounting Technician (AAT) – Levels 1 – 3
Supporting Teaching and Learning – Level 2 and 3
Children's Care Learning & Development NVQ Levels 2 – 4
European Computer Driving Licence
Safeguarding – Level 2
Certificate in Early Years Foundation Stage
Diploma in Playwork – Level 3
Playwork NVQ Level 2 and 3
Supporting Teaching and Learning NVQ 2 and 3
Certificates in Supporting Teaching and Learning – Levels 2 and 3

West Suffolk College – www.westsuffolk.ac.uk

Accounting NVQ - Levels 2 – 4
ILM First Line Management Certificate
Administration NVQ Level 2
Teaching Assistant Certificates Level 2 and 3
Supporting Teaching and Learning – Level 2 and 3
A1 NVQ Assessor Award
V1 Verifier Award
Playwork Certificate - Level 2
Diploma in Playwork – Level 3
Playwork NVQ Level 2 and 3
Children and Young People NVQ Level 2 and 3
Food Preparation and Cooking – NVQ 2
Support Work in Schools – Levels 2 and 3
Children's Care, Learning and Development NVQ Levels 2 – 4

Suffolk NVQ Consortium - www.enquiry@suffolknvq.co.uk

Support Worker in Schools Level 2 and 3
Children's Care, Learning and Development - Levels 2, 3 and 4
Playwork - Levels 2 and 3
H & S Care Children and Young People - Level 3
A1 Assessor Award
V1 Verifier Award
Administration - Levels 3 and 4
Management - Levels 3 and 4
Registered Managers Award

University Campus Suffolk – www.ucs.ac.uk

Foundation Degree in Childcare, Learning and Development (options for KS1 and 2, Early Years, Playwork and Children's Services.
Foundation Degree in Inclusive Learning
BA Hons in Children, Young People and Policy
Foundation Degree by Employment Based Independent Study
BA Hons in Youth Studies

**Appendix Two: School Support Staff: Application for support with funding
FE Bursaries: 2009-2010: return by Friday 3 July 2009**

Name			
Job Title			
School Employee	<input type="checkbox"/>	School Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Key Stage (if applicable)			
School			
School Address			

School Contact Number	
Name of Headteacher	
Email Address	
Applicant's home tel no	
Name of Qualification	
Institution offering Qualification	
Length of qualification	
Amount Requested (ie 70% of the total)	

Please delete as appropriate

(1) I have checked with the course provider and I am not entitled to any subsidy from any other source

(2) I have checked with the course provider and I am entitled to a contribution towards the total cost of

the course from other sources of This leaves me with a total of to pay.

For first year students

Have you a confirmed place on the course? Y/N

Please note that funding will be subject to confirmed place and documentary evidence of acceptance on the programme will be needed before funding is released.

For continuing students

Confirmation from the college/institution will be needed that satisfactory progress has been made in the first year. (This could be a letter or confirmation that modules taken have been satisfactorily completed).

For all students:

Please answer the following question (no more than 300 words)

How will this qualification benefit the pupils and the school?

Please note that the quality of this answer will be taken into consideration when there is competition for funds.

Statement of Support from the School

Please note that this answer forms part of the assessment criteria when deciding on awarding bursaries

I confirm that I have no objections to the above named institution providing information on my academic progress and course fees to Suffolk County Council.

I also confirm that I have checked and the amount requested is the amount I am required to pay after other support has been accessed. (Not applicable for SWIS applicants)

I understand that Suffolk County Council will fund a maximum of 70% of the course costs for FE applications, that any monies will be paid to my school and that I remain responsible for paying fees direct to the provider.

Please note that monies will be paid in two instalments. Half at the beginning of a programme and half on completion or proof of satisfactory progress if the course is for more than one year.

Signature (Applicant)

Date

Signature (Headteacher)

Date

Please note:

If the student does not complete the course of study chosen without good reason (see list of exemptions below) the school will be liable to return the bursary.

In the unlikely event of reimbursement being sought, the reasons and amount would be agreed with the school.

Exemptions:

- (A) Repayment is not required where employees transfer within the local government service.
- (B) Repayment will not be required where the employee leaves employment following maternity leave.
- (C) Where the employee is dismissed because of permanent ill health/disability.
- (D) Where the employee does not achieve the qualification despite, in the opinion of the Head of Service, a genuine effort to do so.
- (E) Where the employee leaves the course for other reasons accepted by the Head of Service.
- (F) In exceptional circumstances the County Council will consider accepting repayment by instalments.
- (G) Where a proportion of the grant is to be repaid to the County Council the amount will normally be calculated pro rata according to how much of the course has been completed.

Please return the application form by **Friday 3 July 2009** to:

Liz Meadows liz.meadows@suffolk.gov.uk Suffolk County Council, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX, Or Fax: 01473 216853

**Appendix Three: Application for a bursary
Higher Education/Level 4+ Qualification
2009-2010: Return by Friday 3 July 2009**

Name	
Job Title	
Key Stage (if applicable)	
School	
School Address	

School Contact Number	
Name of Headteacher	
Email Address	
Applicant's home tel no	
Name of Qualification	
Institution offering Qualification	
Length of qualification	

For 2009/2010 will you be:

1 st Year Student	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 nd Year Student	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 rd Year Student	<input type="checkbox"/>	4 th Year Student	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please delete as appropriate

- (1) I have checked with the course provider and I am not entitled to any subsidy from any other source
- (2) I have checked with the course provider and I am entitled to a contribution towards the total cost of the course from other sources of This leaves me with a total of to pay.

For first year students

Have you a confirmed place on the course?

Y/N

Please note that funding will be subject to confirmed place and documentary evidence of acceptance on the programme will be needed before funding is released.

For continuing students

Confirmation from the college/institution will be needed that satisfactory progress has been made in the first year. (This could be a letter from the college or confirmation that modules taken have been satisfactorily completed).

For all students:

Please answer the following question (no more than 300 words)

How will this qualification benefit the pupils and the school?

Please note that the quality of this answer will be taken into consideration when there is competition for funds.

Statement of Support from the School

Please note that this answer forms part of the assessment criteria when deciding on awarding bursaries

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I confirm that I have no objections to the above named institution providing information on my academic progress and course fees to Suffolk County Council.

I also confirm that I have checked and the amount requested is the amount I am required to pay after all other support has been accessed.

I understand that Suffolk County Council will fund a maximum of £700 for HE applications, that any monies will be paid to my school and that I remain responsible for paying fees direct to the college/university.

Please note that monies will be paid in two instalments. Half at the beginning of a programme and half on completion or proof of satisfactory progress if the course is for more than one year.

Signature (Applicant)

Date

Signature Headteacher

Date

Please note:

If the student does not complete the course of study chosen without good reason (see list of exemptions below) the school will be liable to return the bursary.

In the unlikely event of reimbursement being sought, the reasons and amount would be agreed with the school.

Exemptions:

- (A) Repayment is not required where employees transfer within the local government service.
- (B) Repayment will not be required where the employee leaves employment following maternity leave.
- (C) Where the employee is dismissed because of permanent ill health/disability.
- (D) Where the employee does not achieve the qualification despite, in the opinion of the Head of Service, a genuine effort to do so.
- (E) Where the employee leaves the course for other reasons accepted by the Head of Service.
- (F) In exceptional circumstances the County Council will consider accepting repayment by instalments.
- (H) Where a proportion of the grant is to be repaid to the County Council the amount will normally be calculated pro rata according to how much of the course has been completed.

Please return the application form **by Friday 3 July 2009**

Liz Meadows liz.meadows@suffolk.gov.uk

Suffolk County Council, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX

Or Fax: 01473 216853

Summary of Key Points: FE/HE Bursaries for school support staff: 2009-2010

Funding for courses of further education (up to Advanced Level or NVQ 3 or Equivalent)

- Up to 70% of course fees for any accredited qualification
- Qualification must be listed on the National Database of Accredited Qualifications <http://www.openquals.org.uk/openquals/SimpleSearch.aspx?nav=key>
- Up to 5 bursaries reserved for volunteers
- Applicants must be supported by schools
- Bursaries will be paid to schools
- Bursaries will be paid in two instalments. Half at the beginning of a programme and half on completion or proof of satisfactory progress if the course is for more than one year.
- Funding for courses starting in 2009 – 2010 financial year only.
- No guarantees of continued funding beyond 2009-2010
- You will be asked to confirm you have checked with your provider that you are not entitled to funding from any other source

- Apply using Appendix Two: Application Form for FE Bursaries

- Apply by 3rd July 2009

Funding for Level 4+ qualifications (including Higher Education (HE) qualifications)

- Up to 50% or £700 of course fees (whichever is the lesser amount) for any accredited qualification. Excluding degrees taken on a full time basis and eligible for student grants/loans.
- Qualification must be accredited by a UK HE institution or listed on the National Database of Accredited Qualifications <http://www.openquals.org.uk/openquals/SimpleSearch.aspx?nav=key>
- Applicants must be supported by schools
- Bursaries will be paid to schools
- Bursaries will be paid in two instalments. Half at the beginning of a programme and half on completion or proof of satisfactory progress if the course is for more than one year.
- Funding for courses starting in 2009 – 2010 financial year only.
- No guarantees of continued funding beyond 2009-2010 You will be asked to confirm you have checked with your provider that you are not entitled to funding from any other source. Full time students entitled to student grants/loans are not eligible

- Apply using Appendix Three: Application for a bursary: HE/Level 4 qualifications

- Apply by 3rd July 2009

Please see letter to schools 27th April 2009 for more details.

Accreditation and Funding Options: Support Staff CPD

Attendance Only	Suffolk Support Staff Learning Academy	Support Work in Schools (SWIS)	'full' qualifications at Levels 2 and 3	Post Level 3 qualifications/nationally recognised opportunities (undergraduate level and beyond)
<p>What is it? Courses which only require attendance</p> <p>The content from these courses may be helpful in providing evidence for qualifications but are not necessarily designed to do so.</p>	<p>What is it? A way of gaining recognition for applying new learning to improve your day to day work.</p> <p>You produce a report or presentation that shows what the learning is/how you have used it in your practice/what the impact has been and how you have shared that with others.</p> <p>This report is then checked for quality and, once it has met the SSSLA criteria, is formally recognised as meeting Suffolk standards.</p> <p>SSSLA is a new form of recognition and only available where schools have an SSSLA scheme in place.</p>	<p>What is it? This is essentially a 'short version' of an NVQ. It is available for all staff roles in schools.</p> <p>It consists of between 3 and 6 units and is available at Levels 2 (GCSE C+) and 3 (Advanced Level).</p> <p>It is accreditation for what you already do and the opportunity to extend this.</p> <p>Useful as for those starting out or with only a limited amount of time to devote to CPD.</p> <p>Offered by local colleges and training providers</p>	<p>What is it? NVQs or taught courses at Levels 2 and 3.</p> <p>Most vocational qualifications are based on National Occupational Standards.</p> <p>NVQs are about workplace assessment with some workshops to provide underpinning knowledge. Taught courses traditionally involve more regular attendance at college</p>	<p>What is it? This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NVQs at Level 4+ • Higher Level Teaching Assistant status • Certificate in School Business Management • Foundation Degrees • Diploma in School Business Management • Honours Degrees • Post graduate diplomas • Masters • Doctorate
<p>Funding: Charge to schools. Some courses are partially or fully subsidised by the Local Authority.</p>	<p>Funding: Depends whether the cost has been absorbed by the SSSLA scheme operating in your area. Possibility of support from Local Authority</p>	<p>Funding: Funded by individual or school but with possibility of support through application to Local Authority bursary scheme</p>	<p>Funding: Funded by individual or school but with possibility of support through application to Local Authority bursary scheme - particularly where groups of support staff are coming together in their locality.</p> <p>Train to Gain funding may be available for individuals/groups taking NVQs</p>	<p>Funding: Funded by individual or school but with possibility of support through application to Local Authority bursary scheme</p>
<p>Contact: Course Provider</p>	<p>Contact: Carol Hitchman Carol.hitchman@suffolk.gov.uk</p>	<p>Contact: Liz Meadows Liz.meadows@suffolk.gov.uk</p>	<p>Contact: Liz Meadows Liz.meadows@suffolk.gov.uk</p> <p>Train to Gain funding: gerald.bark@tchc.net</p>	<p>Contact: Liz Meadows Liz.meadows@suffolk.gov.uk</p>

