

THE UNIVERSITY CHILDCARE HARDSHIP FUND **INFORMATION SHEET 2017/18**

The University operates a Childcare Hardship Fund, which offers financial assistance to **home** student parents with **Ofsted-registered** childcare costs.

[EU and overseas students with dependant children are eligible to apply for the Central Childcare Bursary Scheme. For more information please visit www.childcare.admin.cam.ac.uk/supportwithchildcarecosts/about.]

Eligibility

The Childcare Hardship Fund is open to any **registered home student parents**.

General Rules

The University Childcare Hardship Fund can offer limited financial assistance to home student parents towards confirmed Ofsted-registered childcare costs (see the section on Ofsted Registration for guidance) and NOT with the general expenses of bringing up a child. All applicants are expected to have made reasonable and realistic provision for dependant children, as evidenced in their Financial Guarantee to the University, and to have applied for all grants, benefits, allowances or other forms of support to which they are entitled. Where applicants have clearly not done so, the award of a bursary may not be appropriate. The award is intended for students in exceptional, unforeseen financial difficulty, rather than as a core source of support for childcare costs. If an applicant's partner/spouse is neither working nor studying, it is assumed that they will be responsible for childcare and a bursary would not ordinarily be made, unless there are exceptional personal circumstances.

Students on Fieldwork: In some circumstances, it may be possible for students who are required to undertake fieldwork away from Cambridge as part of their course to claim for childcare costs. The Committee will consider each case on its individual merits.

You are strongly urged to discuss your application in the first instance with your College Tutor who will be required to comment on and sign your application.

When To Apply

You may apply at any time throughout the 2017/18 academic year, but it's anticipated that most of the available funding will have been distributed by Easter Term 2018. Applications will be accepted until funds are exhausted. If your application is successful, the award you receive is intended to last until the end of the academic year. **Students can only apply more than once in one academic year if financial circumstances have changed significantly.**

Assessing Your Application

The Childcare Hardship Fund Applications are means-tested and awarded according to guidelines and a points system, which compares annual income and expenditure with Ofsted-registered childcare costs.

Students with exceptional course demands or family circumstances, such as financial difficulties, illness or death, or size of the family will also be taken into account. You should detail all information on the form that you want taken into account when your application is assessed. If necessary, attach an extra sheet. Please note that it may be necessary for the childcare provider to be contacted to clarify certain details on the application.

Awards are currently up to a maximum of £4,500 per year. Awards are intended to last for the entire academic year, while you are an active student and you are using childcare.

Data protection

The personal information about your family circumstances that you provide on this form will be used for the purpose of assessing against the Childcare Support Fund criteria. It will be treated in strictest confidence and will only be disclosed to staff of the University and your College, if appropriate. For more information about how we handle your personal information, and your rights under data protection legislation, please see <https://www.information-compliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/data-protection/general-data>.

Ofsted Registration

Funds are usually only awarded to students who are paying for Ofsted-registered childcare. Ofsted, the Government's Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, inspects and regulates childcare facilities. Many childcare providers are required to register with Ofsted. Ofsted registration is split into the Ofsted Early Years Register and the Ofsted Childcare Register, which has compulsory and voluntary parts. Childcare providers that care for children from birth to five years must follow the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and join the Early Years Register. This includes nurseries, childminders and any out-of-school clubs and playschemes that care for younger children. Childcare providers that care for children under eight but older than five must join the compulsory part of the Childcare Register.

Some providers are not required to register but can opt to join the voluntary part of the Childcare Register. This includes settings that care for children aged eight and over, providers of short-term care, or carers who work in the child's own home such as nannies. These providers are considered Ofsted-registered for the purposes of the Childcare Hardship Fund.

Ofsted also inspects state schools. Out-of-school or holiday clubs provided directly by schools do not have to be Ofsted-registered in the same way, but will be inspected by Ofsted when they carry out a full school inspection. These clubs are considered Ofsted-registered for the purposes of the Childcare Hardship Fund.

More information on Ofsted registration can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk. Ofsted-registered childcare does not include private music lessons, leisure activities or childcare undertaken by family members. However, the Committee will take into account exceptional circumstances and if you feel your case should be considered, you should apply.

Payments

You will receive an initial confirmation of receipt before your application is assessed. The aim is to assess and respond to your application within six working weeks of receipt, although sometimes final decisions may depend on the provision of further information by applicants. If you send your form in early i.e. in July or August, awards will not be made until the start of the academic year. However, we are willing to approximate the level of award that you may be eligible for.

If you are successful, a cheque will be sent to your College Tutor or you can collect it from the Childcare Office, at an agreed upon time. Awards will be paid in a single instalment.

Appeals

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your application and believe that there has been a miscalculation or misunderstanding of the figures or information you have provided, you should initially discuss the matter with your Tutor. The administrators will seek to resolve appeal cases or other cases of disagreement through negotiation with your College and through consultation with the Chair of the Joint Committee on Childcare for Students. Appeal cases that cannot be resolved in this way will be referred to the full Committee for final adjudication.

How to Complete the Form

Please answer all questions truthfully and fully with as much detail as possible. Print clearly or tick boxes as appropriate. **You must attach documentation from the Ofsted-registered childcare provider detailing the secured place or places, including the child's name, the nursery fees, booking pattern and the start dates.** Return this form to your College Tutor for checking. Your Tutor may ask to see supporting documents before signing the declaration. A supporting statement from your Tutor can make all the difference in the Committee's decision to award an award. **Completed forms** should be returned by your Tutor/College to: Manager, Childcare Services, Childcare Office, 21 Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1QA.

Further Information

See the Childcare Office website at www.childcare.admin.cam.ac.uk for further information, useful contacts, support and childcare advice. You can also contact the University Childcare Information Adviser, the Cambridge University Students' Union or the Graduate Union.

Childcare Information Adviser

Childcare Office
21 Trumpington Street
Cambridge
Tel: 01223 332249
Email: childcare@admin.cam.ac.uk
Web: www.childcare.admin.cam.ac.uk