

Academic Year 2026/2027

Financial Support Eligibility Guide

For Further Education Students

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1. Applicant Responsibilities

You need to ensure you:

- Are familiar with the student support fund you are applying for support from.
- Keep the Financial Support Team informed of changes to your personal circumstances, address, contact details or days you are timetabled to attend.
- Provide, at each stage of the application process, true and accurate information in a timely manner which could have a bearing on the outcome of your application.
- Meet college behaviour and attendance standards. Awards will cease immediately if you withdraw early from your course, or you no longer meet the eligibility criteria for these funds.

2. Key Information

The information below applies to all Learner Support Funds administered by the College and funded through the Department for Education (DfE), the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority (GLCCA), the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA), the Student Loans Company (SLC – for Advanced Learner Loans), or other public funds.

3. General Eligibility Requirements

3.1 Residency

You must:

- Be living and studying in England, and
- Meet the age and residency requirements set out in the relevant DfE, GLCCA, EMCCA or SLC funding rules.

3.2 Course Eligibility

Support is only available to learners who are:

- Enrolled on and have started a Further Education course that is publicly funded.

Support is not available if you are enrolled on:

- A Full Cost course
- Tailored (Community) Learning
- Higher Education course
- Apprenticeship
- Any other form of waged training

Support is also not available if you are:

- In prison or a Young Offender Institution
- Released on temporary licence (e.g. day release)
- Remanded to a secure institution

3.3 Advanced Learner Loan Funded Students

If your course is funded through an Advanced Learner Loan, support will only be considered where:

- The College has received confirmation from Student Loans Company (SLC) that your loan is fully approved, and
- You have attended your course for a minimum of two weeks.

4. Availability of Funds

4.1 Eligible Costs

Subject to eligibility, a contribution may be provided towards course related costs confirmed as essential by your study area. This may include:

- Uniform and equipment
- College meals - worth a maximum of £4.50 per day
- Travel to college or college arranged work experience/industry placements
- Cost of appropriate rail cards
- Travel to Higher Education interviews (maximum of two)
- UCAS application fees
- Stationery and books
- Trips within England that are confirmed in writing by your academic study area as essential for you to complete specific learning aims of your study programme goals/qualifications or support course objectives
- Examination resit fees
- Childcare support

4.2 Ineligible Costs

Learner Support Funds cannot be used for:

- Laptops
- Living costs
- Extracurricular or non-compulsory activities
- Learning Support services (e.g. counselling)
- The Disclosure and Barring Service Fee
- Participation costs that are wholly or partly met from another source (e.g. Local Authority funding).

4.3 Use of Funds and Restrictions

- Awards are made on a first come, first served basis and are cash limited. Support cannot be guaranteed. The minimum award payable is £5.00.
- Support is provided during **term time only**. You will not receive financial support during:
 - College-controlled leave
 - Half-term breaks
 - Christmas or Easter holidays
- These funds will **close**:
 - To new applicants on 19 May 2027
 - To existing applicants on 26 May 2027
 - To 16-18 Travel Pilot applicants on 18th December, 2026.
- Any item purchased using Learner Support Funds (e.g. uniform or equipment) may be deemed College property. You may be required to return items:
 - If you withdraw early from your course, or
 - On completion of your course.

- You will be required to **repay any unused or overpaid travel support** or receive deductions from a future payment where:
 - Your timetable has changed and you receive an overpayment, or
 - You withdraw early from your course, or
 - You complete your course early.
- If you are aged 19 or over and classed as fully funded for fees purposes it is your responsibility to notify DWP about any financial support you are receiving from us. Learner Support Fund payments may affect your state benefits (where applicable).
- Other rules may apply and the above may be subject to change or amendment without notice.

5. Assessment of Household Income

With the exception of the 16-18 Extended Bursary, Care to Learn and the Care Leavers Support Fund (which are all non-means tested), the household income used to assess your application will be based on the following:

5.1 Learners Aged 16–18 on 31 August 2026

- **Living with two parents, legal guardians, foster carers, or one parent, legal guardian, foster carer and their partner:**
Combined gross household income and/or benefits of both adults are assessed.
- **Living with a lone parent, lone legal guardian or lone foster carer**
That adult's gross income and/or benefits are assessed.
- **Living with an adult who is not your parent, legal guardian or foster carer:**
That adult's income will only be assessed if they claim Child Benefit or Universal Credit for you. Written evidence is required.
- **Dependent learners:**
If your living costs are paid by your parent(s), guardian(s), foster carer(s), you are assessed as their dependent and will be assessed as shown above.
- **Independent learners:**
If you meet your living costs fully through work or benefits in your own right, you may be assessed on your own income. Evidence is required to confirm you are financially supporting yourself (e.g. tenancy agreement, utility bill, or council tax bill in your name).

5.2 Learners Aged 19+ on 31 August 2026

- **Living with parents, independently, in halls, or shared accommodation:**
You are assessed on your own gross income and/or benefits.
- **Living with a partner:**
Combined gross household income and/or benefits of both adults are assessed.

5.3 What Evidence Will I Need to Provide?

The evidence we need will depend on your household circumstances. Examples of accepted evidence include, but are not limited to:

- The three most recent payslips if paid monthly or 4-weekly, or last 6 payslips if paid weekly or fortnightly.
- A full copy of the self-assessment tax calculation or certified accounts for those who are self-employed.
- The last three Universal Credit statements from your online account. Statements should be downloaded and submitted in PDF format. To find out how to do this, [please watch the following video](#). More detailed information about acceptable Universal Credit evidence will be provided during the application process.

5.4 Additional Information

- You and your parent(s), guardian(s), foster carer(s) or partner may also be required to sign an income/savings and investments declaration and may also be requested to provide further evidence e.g. a bank statement.
- Support will not be given if any of the evidence submitted shows that there is not a financial need or yours or (where applicable) your parent(s), guardian(s), foster carer(s) or partner's savings and/or any investments exceed a combined total of £16,000.
- If your household is in receipt of Universal Credit and your PayMyStudent Learner Support Fund Application states that you are aged 16-18 and live with 2 parent, guardians or foster carers, or aged 19 or over and live with a partner, all relevant parties must be named on the Universal Credit payment statement(s) provided. Support cannot be provided if this is not the case.
- If the most recent Universal Credit statements provided show a £0.00 payment amount, you will be assessed as not in receipt of Universal Credit and an assessment will be made based on payslips (where applicable).

6. Learners Aged 19 or over and enrolled on Level 3 or Above Further Education Funded Qualifications

In addition to the above, if you are 19 or over, studying a level 3 or above Further Education course, you will not be able to receive support unless:

1. You are a 19+ continuer (on the same course, at the same level as you started in the academic year you turned 19), or
2. You are aged between 19 and 24 and are subject to a 2026/27 Education Health Care Plan, or
3. You are aged 19-23 and are enrolled on an eligible Full Level 3 qualification and are studying your first Full Level 3 qualification, or
4. You are aged 19 or over and undertaking a course funded through the Free Courses for Jobs offer and you meet the additional eligibility criteria to receive fee remission, or
5. You have made a successful application for a 19+ Advanced Learner Loan and are using your loan to pay all or part of your course fee (other rules apply).

Should it be found at a later date that you do not meet criteria 1 to 4 above you will be required to repay any support you have received unless you make a successful application for an Advanced Learner Loan.

7. Financial Support Eligibility Criteria and Additional Information

Fund	General Eligibility Criteria - Other Rules Apply	Additional Information
<p>16-18 Extended Bursary (DfE 16 to 19 Bursary Fund)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are in Local Authority Care or a Care Leaver You receive Universal Credit in your own name and are financially supporting yourself (or financially supporting yourself and someone who is dependent on you and living with you, such as a child or partner), or You receive Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment and Universal Credit in your own name 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For students aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31st August 2026 This Bursary is worth up to a maximum of £1,200.00 per academic year and is based on essential course participation costs (e.g. travel, meals, course related costs etc). Awards will not be made where there is no financial need e.g. you have no essential course participation costs. If your essential course participation costs exceed £1,200.00, further support may be available through the 16-18 Learner Support Fund. You must have a bank account in your own name. Payments cannot be made into another person's account.
<p>16-18 Learner Support Fund (DfE 16 to 19 Bursary Fund)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You live in a household where your parent(s), guardian(s) or foster carer(s) receive Universal Credit, and the total annual net income (assessed earnings and the Universal Credit payment) does not exceed £48,000 per year, or whose assessed gross household income is less than £48,000 per year, or You live in a household where your parent(s), guardian(s) or, foster carer(s) receive the guarantee element of Pension Credit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For students aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31st August 2026 See Section 9 - Travel Support: Key Information for All Applicants and Additional Eligibility Criteria for more information.
<p>16-18 Travel Pilot (Provided through Lincoln College)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You live in a household where your parent(s), guardian(s) or foster carer(s) assessed gross household income is between £48,000 and £60,000 per year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This fund is available to students aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31st August 2026 attending Newark College, including ASI, or where your postcode begins with LN7, LN8 or DN21 and you attend Lincoln College -Monks Road, Christ Hospital Terrace, Rand Park Farm or Caistor Equestrian Centre. See Section 9 - Travel Support: Key Information for All Applicants and Additional Eligibility Criteria for more information.
<p>16-19 Care to Learn (C2L) Childcare Support (Provided through the DfE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are the main carer and in receipt of Child Benefit for the child or children for whom you are claiming childcare support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For students aged under 20 at the start of their course. See Section 10. Childcare Support: Key Information for All Applicants and Additional Eligibility Criteria for more information

Fund	General Eligibility Criteria - Other Rules Apply	Additional Information
<p>Free College Meals (DfE Free Meals in Further Education)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You live in a household where you, your parent(s), guardian(s) or foster carer(s) are in receipt Universal Credit (Other rules apply). You receive support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 Households in receipt of Income-related Employment and Support Allowance or the guarantee element of Pension Credit may also be entitled to a meal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For students aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31st August 2026, or aged between 19-24 on the 31st August 2026 and either subject to a 2026/27 Education Health Care Plan, or aged 19 and studying on the exact same programme you started before you turned 19. See Section 8: Meals Support: Further information and additional eligibility criteria for more information
<p>16-18 Meal Support Scheme (16 to 19 Bursary Fund)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You meet the eligibility criteria for the 16-18 Learner Support Fund. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For students aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31st August 2026 See Section 8: Meals Support: Further information and additional eligibility criteria for more information
<p>Care Leavers' Support Fund (Part of the GLCCA Adult Skills Fund)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are a Care Leaver and reside within the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority area (GLCCA), and enrolled on a programme of learning of at least 60 Guided Learning Hours (GLH) funded by the GLCCA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For students aged 19 or over and under 25 on 31 August 2026 This Bursary is worth up to a maximum of £1,500.00 per academic year and is based on essential course participation costs (e.g. travel, meals, course related costs etc). Awards will not be made where there is no financial need e.g. you have no essential course participation costs. If your essential course participation costs exceed £1,500.00, further support may be available through the 19+ Learner Support Fund. You must have a bank account in your own name. Payments cannot be made into another person's account.

Fund	General Eligibility Criteria - Other Rules Apply	Additional Information
<p>19+ Learner Support Fund (Part of either The DfE, GLCCA or EMCCA 19+ Adult Skills Fund, or the DfE's 19+ Advanced Learner Loan Bursary)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are in receipt of Universal Credit and the total annual net income (assessed earnings and the Universal Credit payment) does not exceed £48,000 per year or, • You are in receipt of the Guarantee Element of Pension Credit or, • You live with a parent, guardian or foster carer, do not receive benefits, and your gross income is less than £16,000 per year, or • You live independently as a single person, do not receive benefits and your gross income is less than £32,000 per year, or • You live with a partner, do not receive benefits and your gross household income is less than £48,000 per year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For students aged 19 or over on 31st August 2026 • See Section 8 - Travel Support: Key Information for All Applicants and Additional Eligibility Criteria for more information.
<p>20+ Childcare Fund (Part of either The DfE, GLCCA or EMCCA 19+ Adult Skills Fund, or the DfE's 19+ Advanced Learner Loan Bursary)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are in receipt of Universal Credit and the total annual net income (assessed earnings and the Universal Credit payment) does not exceed £48,000 per year and, • You are the main carer and in receipt of Child Benefit for the child or children for whom you are claiming childcare support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For students aged 20 or over at the start of your course. • See Section 9. Childcare Support: Key Information for All Applicants and Additional Eligibility Criteria for more information

8. Meals Support: Further information and additional eligibility criteria

The college offers four meal support schemes.

- Free College Meals Scheme
- 16-18 Learner Support Fund Meals Support Scheme
- 16-18 Extended Bursary
- Care Leavers' Support Fund

Eligible students will receive a maximum allowance of £4.50 per day from the date eligibility is confirmed and the Financial Support Team have received confirmation you have enrolled and have started your course. Support is only available on the days you attend a timetabled lesson at one of our college sites, or attend a timetabled college organised trip or placement (other rules apply).

If you attend Lincoln College (Monks Road Campus) or Newark College (including Newark ASI) you will access your allowance via your student ID card.

You can use your meal allowance at any time throughout the day whilst our catering facilities are open e.g.:

- to purchase a breakfast, or
- to purchase a main meal at lunchtime, or
- to purchase a sandwich, Meal Deal, or nutritional snack.

If you attend a different college site you will be notified in your award email/letter how you will receive your allowance.

Whilst there are no legal requirements to offer meals support to students who aren't eligible for Free College Meals, where budgets permit, support towards meals through one of the other three schemes identified above may be provided.

9. Travel Support: Further information and additional eligibility criteria

The College offers five types of travel support:

- 16–18 Learner Support Fund Travel Support
- 16–18 Travel Pilot
- 16-18 Extended Bursary
- 19+ Learner Support Fund Travel Support
- Care Leavers' Support Fund

From July to November the college receives a high level of applications for financial support. It is your responsibility, therefore, to pay for transport until you receive your first award.

Travel Support exclusions:

- Learners aged between 19 and 24 with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) may be eligible for free transport support through their Local Authority, where provision is considered necessary to access and complete an appropriate programme of learning up to the age of 25. Please contact your Local Authority if this applies to you.
- Where a learner is in receipt of a free disability or concessionary bus pass, where costs are wholly funded by another source (e.g. a Local Authority) travel support will not be provided, as alternative statutory support is available.

To be eligible for travel support:

- You must live 1.5 miles or more from the College site you attend if you are applying for support through the 16–18 Learner Support Fund, 16-18 Extended Bursary, 19+ Learner Support Fund or the Care Leavers' Support Fund.
- You must live 2.5 miles or more from the College site you attend if you are applying for the 16–18 Travel Pilot.

Exceptions to the minimum distance requirement apply where:

- You have a learning difficulty or disability that means you are unable to walk to college from your home address. In these cases, you must either:
 - Provide a signed and dated letter on headed paper from your doctor confirming this, or
 - Have completed an assessment with a Student Services Assessment and Support Co-ordinator, with written confirmation uploaded to your college record.
- You are in receipt of childcare support provided by Lincoln College.

Travel support is subject to the following conditions:

- You must provide a copy of a recent full day's bus/train ticket(s) to confirm the cost of your daily journey. Support cannot be provided if you do not do this.
- Support will not be provided for travel by taxi (unless funded through the Lincolnshire County Council Post 16 Travel Scheme).
- Where you are being driven to your nearest bus stop or train station, additional support for this journey will only be provided if:
 - it is an exceptional journey (further evidence may be required), and
 - the distance travelled to the drop off point exceeds 3 miles.
- You must use the cheapest and most appropriate mode of transport, including the use of rail cards, discounted bus-fares, and can only claim for one return journey from and to your normal place of residence per day. We do not pay booking fees.
- Support will be calculated using the shortest suggested route, including walking, on Google Maps.
- Support provided will, on all occasions, be based solely on your home address as shown in your PayMyStudent application.

The maximum travel support available is:

- Up to **£70.00 per week** for learners eligible through the 16–18 Learner Support Fund or the 19+ Learner Support Funds.
- Up to **£16.00 per week** for learners eligible through the 16–18 Travel Pilot.
- Learners eligible through the 16–18 Extended Bursary or the Care Leavers' Support Fund will receive travel support until the maximum allocation for course participation costs (see [Section 6](#) for more information) has been fully allocated. Further support will be available if you make a successful application to the Learner Support Funds.

Payment and attendance conditions:

- For learners eligible through the 16–18 Learner Support Fund, 16–18 Travel Pilot or the 19+ Learner Support Fund travel support is normally paid half-termly by BACS
- For learners eligible through the 16–18 Extended Bursary or the Care Leavers' Support Fund travel support is normally paid weekly, in arrears by BACS
- Support will only be paid from the half-term in which your application is assessed as successful.

- You will only receive support for days when your college register confirms that you physically attended your course.
- Travel awards are based on the cost of travel at the **start of the academic year**. This is because funds are limited and the need to support as many students as possible.
- Awards are provisional and subject to you maintaining **100% attendance**, including tutorials, Maths, English, and work experience or industrial placements.
- Awards will be reduced or withdrawn if attendance requirements are not met.

If you travel by car/motorcycle:

- Approved awards for travel by car will be paid at a rate of 25p per mile and awards for travel by motorcycle will be paid at a rate of 15p per mile, **up to a maximum of £10.00 per day**.
- You can only claim for one return journey.
- You will only be paid mileage if you are the driver/rider, or you are being taken to college by a parent, guardian or foster carer who is not a college student and who is making an exceptional journey. An exceptional journey is one where the sole purpose of the driver is to take you to college or a bus stop or train station and return home immediately afterwards (or vice versa).
- Where the parent, guardian or foster carer is transporting two or more learners to the same college location at the same time only one learner will receive travel support.
- The Fund will not reimburse car parking charges or parking fines

If you travel by train:

- If you are aged 16 or 17 your award will be based on you having purchased a [16-17 Saver Rail Card](#). The 16-17 Saver Rail Card costs a maximum of £35 and offers a reduction of 50% off all rail travel.
- If you are aged 18 or above and your return ticket costs in excess of £12.00 per day your award will be based on you having purchased an appropriate rail card (e.g. [18-25 Rail Card](#) or [26-30 Rail Card](#)). This costs a maximum of £35 and gives 1/3rd of some rail fares.
- You may be eligible for a refund towards the cost of one of the above rail cards if you meet the eligibility criteria of the Learner Support Fund. You must provide evidence that confirms your name, the date valid to and from and purchase price of the rail card.

If you travel to college by bus:

- Your cost of travel will be based on, where applicable, the national bus fare cap unless a cheaper alternative is available (e.g. Stagecoach Young Persons ticket which is available for learners under the age of 20).
- If you or your parent(s), guardian(s), foster carer(s) have paid for Lincolnshire County Council's (LCC) Post 16 Transport Pass you must provide us with proof of payment and the TRA and PAY numbers which LCC issue to successful applicants.
- If you are aged 16, 17 or 18 on 31st August 2026 and live 3 miles or more from college (as the crow flies) **and within the red line as shown on this map** and would like the LCC Transport Pass rather than be paid half-termly by BACS, you must:
 1. [Apply for the LCC Post 16 Transport Pass](#), and
 2. Pay for the first instalment of the pass of £96.50. The deadline for applications for the 2026 to 2027 academic year is 31 July 2026. If you miss this deadline, you may still apply, but you may not receive your pass for the start of the new academic year, and
 3. Provide us with the TRA and PAY numbers, along with a copy of your proof of payment.

10. Childcare Support: Further information and additional eligibility criteria

The College offers two types of childcare support:

- Care to Learn (C2L)
- 20+ Childcare Support.

You must be the main carer and be in receipt of Child Benefit for the child or children for whom you are claiming childcare support. If you lose custody of your child or children at any time, even temporarily, you must inform the Financial Support Team immediately.

Where you are in receipt of, or become eligible for, government-funded childcare hours, these hours must be used first. Childcare Support Funds will only contribute towards additional hours beyond the government-funded entitlement and only in line with your college timetable.

You may claim childcare support provided that:

- The child or children's other parent is unable to provide childcare, for example because they are in education, in employment, or absent.
- The other parent is not claiming childcare costs through any other funding source, including government-funded early years provision or Universal Credit.

Your childcare provider must be registered with Ofsted and appropriate for the age of the child or children being cared for. This may include:

- A registered childminder
- A preschool playgroup
- A day nursery
- A breakfast club or after-school club

Childcare payments will be made directly to the childcare provider.

Childcare payments will stop immediately if you stop attending college or if you remove your child or children from the childcare provider. This is a national requirement. You will be responsible for paying any childcare fees not covered by the Care to Learn Scheme or the 20+ Childcare Support Fund.

16-19 Care to Learn (C2L) Additional Information:

- You must be under 20 years old on the date you start your study programme. If you become 20 years old during your study programme you can continue to receive funding to the end of that specific study programme, so to the end of the same programme at the same level.
- C2L can provide childcare and travel support up to a maximum of £180.00 per week based on your timetable at college. If your costs exceed the £180.00 Care to Learn maximum, further support will only be available if you meet the eligibility criteria for the Learner Support Fund. If you do not meet the eligibility criteria, it is your responsibility to pay any outstanding balance.
- C2L may pay for travel costs, where appropriate, if these are necessary for you to take your child(ren) between your childcare provider and home. C2L travel costs are only paid if they are not being met from the Learner Support Fund and are additional to your normal travel costs from home to the college.
- C2L can pay for deposits up to a maximum of £250.00 if the childcare provider requires this.
- C2L can pay any registration fees that are charged by your childcare provider, up to a maximum of £80.00 per child. This is a one-off payment and will not be paid for subsequent academic years if you use the same childcare provider.

- C2L may pay a maximum of £180.00 a week towards the cost of a summer retainer fee. This only applies if you finish study in one year and continue your study in the next academic year (other rules apply).

20+ Childcare Support Additional Information:

- The 20+ Childcare Fund, after deductions (e.g. 15 or 30 government funded hours per week), can contribute a maximum award per academic year of £8600.00 (£200 per week) regardless of number of children claimed for and/or childcare providers used.
- You maintain a minimum attendance level of 85%. Any absence must be authorised by your curriculum area. Your support will be at risk if you fail to do this.
- This fund cannot help with deposit fees, registration fees or summer retainer fees.
- Subject to continued eligibility (which must be re-confirmed each academic year) and funds being available, the college will support childcare fees for a maximum of three academic years.
- You cannot receive support from this fund if you receive the Childcare Element of Universal Credit.

11. Unsuccessful Applications:

- If your application is unsuccessful, you will be emailed and advised of the reason for this decision.
- You may appeal this decision by writing to the Financial Support Team Specialist, Student Services, Lincoln College, Monks Road, Lincoln, LN2 5HQ. You will receive a written reply to your appeal within 10 working days.

12. Complaints Procedure:

- If you are unhappy with any aspect of the administration of your application or the service received you can let the college know in writing through the [Feedback and Complaints procedure](#).

13. How to Apply for Financial Support:

- If you feel you are eligible for support, please apply online through our [online application portal](#). We will let you know by email/letter within 10 working days (15 days during the Summer and Autumn Terms) whether or not your application has been successful or if we need further evidence.

14. Confidentiality and Data Protection (GDPR)

The data requested within our online application portal (PayMyStudent), and any associated evidence, will only be used for the purpose of assessing your eligibility for financial support from the Learner Support Fund, other financial support funds and for the administration of our Meal Support schemes. Your application and evidence are only seen by staff involved in the administration and monitoring of the Learner Support Fund. All such information is stored securely within the PayMyStudent or Meals Support Portal and is retained for 6 years from the end of the academic year in which an application was made.

External auditors can request to see Learner Support Fund application data. This is to ensure that Lincoln College are complying with Government guidelines in relation to administering our Learner Support Funds.

The content of this guide is not exhaustive and is for guidance purposes only and may be subject to change at any time.