



County Durham  
**Community Foundation**

## Atom Futures Fund

Progression to Higher Education is low amongst students in North East England and particularly to the UK's top research-intensive universities. This is partly explained by A level results in the region that are lower than the UK average, but it also applies for students who get the required grades to attend our top universities.

This long-standing pattern happens despite the evidence of advantages to both wellbeing and socio-economic outcomes for students who go to university and in particular to our top research-intensive universities.

To counter this trend Atom Bank wants to support and encourage students from low-income backgrounds and children in care to attend these research-intensive universities, also known as the Russell Group Universities (<https://russellgroup.ac.uk/about/our-universities/>).

The Atom Futures Fund offers financial incentives to eligible Year 13 students who apply to undertake an undergraduate honours degree course at any of the 24 Russell Group Universities, and the potential of further support to those who subsequently take up their offer.

The Fund is being established to promote and support talented young people who come from the communities that are most under-represented in our best universities; we do not believe in exclusivity but we do believe in excellence, and at the moment not enough children in care and children from low income backgrounds are showing the world just how excellent they are.

### What type of funding can you apply for?

**Part 1:** Applications are currently open for a £250 financial incentive for eligible students who apply to a Russell Group University. This incentive is not restricted; it can be used to help you in any way to apply to university e.g. preparing for and travel to interviews, clothing for interview, resource materials, books and equipment etc. But we believe you know best how you will use the money.

We anticipate making at least 20 of these awards every year.

**Part 2:** If you are successful in your application to part 1, a further £1,000 is available for applicants who receive and accept an offer from their chosen Russell Group University. Successful applicants will receive the funding following the Christmas break in their first year. Applications for this element will open in August 2024. We anticipate making at least 5 of these awards every year.

The timing of the award is intended to provide additional support to students returning after Christmas and faced with new costs. Again, the award is not restricted – it is for the successful applicant to decide how to use the money to help them continue their study.

Please note, we will ask on the application form how you might use the fund; you will also be sent a monitoring form after six months to let us know how your studies are progressing. We hope that your experiences will help us shape our funding for future applicants.

If you are successful in your application but do not attend or decide to leave your selected university prior to the issuance of the payment, the offer will be forfeited and any forfeited monies will be returned to the fund for the benefit of future applicants.

### **Who can apply?**

Applications are invited from year 13 students who are currently attending a state school within the boundaries served by Durham County Council. The student must either be eligible for free school meals or currently be in care.

Please note, applications will only be processed subject to verification from a named member of staff at the student's school.

### **Size of grant**

The maximum grant size is £250 in Part 1.

For those that apply to Part 2 in August, a further £1,000 is available.

### **What the fund will not consider:**

- Applications from students not currently in Year 13.
- Applicants attending a school outside of the boundaries served by Durham County Council.
- Applications that are not verified by a member of staff.
- Individuals applying to a master's degree or PhD course.

### **When to apply?**

- For the first year of the fund (2024) applications for part 1 close on 29 April 2024.
- Applications for part 2 close on 10 September 2024
- For subsequent year's, applications to part 1 close on 15 February 2025

We aim to inform you of our decision within 6 weeks from the receipt of a fully complete and eligible application. Our website will contain details if the fund has been fully awarded for a particular year and therefore no more applications can be accepted.

The Russell Group Universities are listed in Appendix 1

## Can you apply to other funds?

Applying to the fund does not restrict you from applying to other Foundation funds or programmes.

To apply for a grant, you must use our online application form which can be found by visiting [www.cdcf.org.uk](http://www.cdcf.org.uk)

## Need more help?

Please contact the Foundation if you need to discuss your request before submitting an application.

E-mail: [info@cdcfc.org.uk](mailto:info@cdcfc.org.uk) / Web: [www.cdcfc.org.uk](http://www.cdcfc.org.uk)

## Appendix 1

### What are the Russell Group Universities?

The Russell Group's 24 member universities are:

- University of Birmingham
- University of Bristol
- University of Cambridge
- Cardiff University
- Durham University
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Exeter
- University of Glasgow
- Imperial College London
- King's College London
- University of Leeds
- University of Liverpool
- London School of Economics
- University of Manchester
- Newcastle University
- University of Nottingham
- University of Oxford
- Queen Mary University of London
- Queen's University Belfast
- University of Sheffield
- University of Southampton
- University College London
- University of Warwick
- University of York