

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE
CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S MEETING WITH EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

23rd June 2020

**ADULT LEARNING AND SKILLS SERVICE
FEES AND CHARGING POLICY 2020/21**

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek the approval of fees levels (and charging policy statement) for learners with an increase in the Community Learning fees for the 2020/21 academic year.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 All the funding received for the Adult Learning and Skills Service is allocated by central Government via the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to fund and support learning for adults aged 19+. All costs associated with the delivery of learning (including all staffing costs) are covered by the ring fenced external budgets. The Advanced Learning Loan funding is to support learners aged 24+ and Apprenticeship funds come through levy employers and supports Apprentices aged 16+
- 2.2 The Adult Learning and Skills Service is a grant funded service with a direct Adult Education Budget (AEB) which is £2,720,706 and Advanced Learner Loans each year which is £79,460
- 2.3 The Adult Learning and Skills Service is proactively refining the curriculum offer to meet the challenges and priorities identified by the Government, the funding agencies, the County Council, Communities of North Yorkshire and the Local Enterprise Partnership. We need to ensure that the fees charged to learners who have to pay for their learning is in line with the funding guidance to ensure that we generate funding to support the service moving forward in a changing landscape.

3. Funding and Allocations

- 3.1 The AEB is funded and calculated in two ways:
- **Adult Skills (Accredited Learning)** is calculated through a formula funding methodology and is allocated to fund accredited learning: £797,23100
 - Fees charged for accredited courses are dependent on the learner's personal circumstances and costs are prescribed by the awarding bodies

- **Community Learning (Non accredited learning)** which is non formula funded but has specific targets and should be used with the focus being to support learners who are the most disadvantaged and furthest from the labour market: £1,923,706

- 3.2 Learners who meet the Government's priorities as a 'targeted' learner are fee remitted and undertake their learning at no cost to themselves. A learner who does not fall within the targeted categories is a 'co-funded' learner which means that the Adult Learning and Skills Service receives 50% of the funding available for the chosen qualification and the learner is expected to pay the remaining 50%. The fees are set by the funding rates and there is no scope for local fee decisions.
- 3.3 In line with the Government priorities the AEB funding aims to engage adults and provide the skills and learning they need to progress into, or within, work or equip them for an apprenticeship or other learning. It enables more flexible tailored programmes of learning to be made available, which may or may not require a qualification, to help eligible learners engage in learning, build confidence, and/or enhance their wellbeing.
- 3.4 The service is ensuring that learners who can pay for their learning do so. Our learning offer has become much more focussed on those who are most disadvantaged. Provision has been developed to support people who are furthest from the labour market to engage or re-engage with learning to develop their confidence, work skills or poor mental health with a view to them progressing.

4. Community Learning

- 4.1 The purpose of Community Learning is fee remitted and is to develop the skills, confidence, motivation and resilience of adults of different ages and backgrounds in order to:
- progress towards formal learning or employment and/or
 - improve their health and well-being, including mental health and/or
 - develop stronger communities
- Community Learning Courses are delivered under the following four delivery strands:
- Personal and Community Development Learning - learning for personal and community development, cultural enrichment, intellectual or creative stimulation and for enjoyment (in most cases not leading to a formal qualification)
 - Family English, Maths and Language - learning to improve the English, language and maths skills of parents, carers or guardians and their ability to help their children with learning
 - Wider Family Learning - learning to help different generations of family members to learn together how to support their children's learning

- Neighbourhood Learning In Deprived Communities - supports local Voluntary and other third sector organisations to develop their capacity to deliver learning opportunities for the residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods

Community Learning Subsidised Offer

- 4.2 The Service offers a small amount of provision through the Community Learning funding to enable learners to join learning activities for their own enjoyment and to learn or improve skills. The mainly offered through the Arts and Crafts programmes but we do have other offers in the curriculum.
- 4.3 We recognise there is an opportunity to grow and offer a more costed learning opportunity in line with the Funding Rules and Guidance document under the title of Pound Plus and local fee remission policy
- 4.4 This offer is costed at £4.50 per hour (£4.00 19/20) for full fee paying learner and £1.80 (£1.60 19/20) for fee remitted learner, this will be applied through the same funding entitlement and fee remission rules as Accredited Learning.

5. Full Cost Offer

- 5.1 The Service could have a bespoke offer to employers or agencies that request learning activities, this has not previously been widely promoted and we would not wish to compete with the Traded Services arm of the Authority but there could be a market with employers we already have relationships with.
- 5.2 This would be fully costed and a “profit” making opportunity to the service as this provision would not be subsidised at all by any of the Grant Funding. The costing for this would be applied using the Full Cost calculator spreadsheet

6. Fee and Charging Policy

Appendix 1 sets out Fees and Charges Policy 2020/21 including:

- ESFA funded adult education budget (AEB): funding rules 2020 to 2021 For the 2020 to 2021 funding year (1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021)
- the funding guidelines and how they are applied to the Service and their learners
- the requirement to set out the service Fee and Charging Policy and to review all fees and charges on an annual basis.

7. Financial Implications

- 7,1 The context for this review is that in February 2020, the County Council approved a new fees and charges policy which essentially states:

- Unless limited by Statute, fees and charges must be uplifted by the relevant inflation that the fees and charges relate to (finance would calculate the inflation rate specific to the relevant cost base)
- There must be a review of opportunities to introduce new fees and charges
- Fees and charges must be at full cost recovery including corporate and departmental overheads (unless limited by Statute as above)
- If it is not possible to charge/ uplift to a minimum of full cost recovery, then the service should be discontinued
- There must be clear benchmarking of fees and charges against other local authorities/ providers/ competitors that evidences why the recommended fees and charges are proposed

7.2 The report proposes to increase the fee for Community Learning **from £4.00** (last updated 2014/15) per hour to **proposed £4.50 per hour** (20/21).

7.3 From discussions with the service, there is no limit on the rate of charge for Community Learning. The finance team have assessed that the overall inflationary pressure the Adult Education budget is experiencing between 2019-20 and 2020-21 is 2.5% - so the proposal corresponds to that pressure and is therefore compliant with that element of the Corporate Fees and Charges policy.

7.4 Some limited benchmarking has been undertaken by the service (see table below) – which was established that some authorities do charge at a higher rate than North Yorkshire. It is proposed that the scope of this benchmarking exercise is refreshed and extended for consideration of charge for future years

Organisation	Fee Information
City of York Learning (ESFA Funding)	Courses in Community Learning for the general fee paying public have a different fee structure from £9.50 per hour, £7.00 per hour to £5.00 per hour depending on the subject. All courses have a concession fee of £35 per course.
The WEA (ESFA Funding)	Courses in Community learning all have the same fee structure and it is one cost for all learners from £1.15 per hour, £3.50 per hour to £3.80 per hour.
Stockton Council Adult Learning	Courses in Community Learning £5 per hour with no concessions
Middlesbrough College (Teesside Combined Authority Funding)	Very little Community Learning offered but of the two courses between £5.70 per hour to £10 per hour for a masterclass activity.
Rossett School in Harrogate (Privately funded)	Large Community Learning offer but not Government funded from £4.50 per hour with no concessions.

North Tyneside Council	Two funding rates - £3.80 per hour and £4.90 per hour
Newcastle City Council	All courses charged at £3.50 per hour

- 7.5 On the basis of the benchmarking data, it is suggested that an alternative approach which could be adopted would be to increase the rate of charges more substantively to £4.50 per hour. However, it should be borne in mind that the overall scale of income is relatively low. In the 2019-20 financial year, community learning only contributed £8,400 to the overall functioning of the service. Therefore, increasing the rate to £4.50 rather than £4.10 per hour (and assuming that there is no expansion in the programme on offer) would only yield an additional £1,000 (approximately).
- 7.6 Therefore, there could be merit in ensuring that the 2021/22 academic year review of charges is informed by: -
- (a) Refreshing and extending of the benchmarking dataset
 - (b) Exploring in depth the full cost recovery position for the service – and presenting options on migration to full cost recovery
 - (c) Reviewing whether there is merit in extending the range of services offered

8. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications related to this report.

9. Conclusion

The Adult Learning and Skills Service is proactively looking to raise its profile as a quality learning provider both internally to NYCC, externally to partner organisations and most importantly to the Local Enterprise Partnership. We are currently well placed to delivery our full funding contract for the 2020/21 academic year and there are some exciting opportunities for developments.

It is proposed that

- the Fee and Charging Policy for the 2010/21 academic year be considered in order for the policy to be implemented in our published offer.
- To accept that these charges are based on the current ESFA Funding Rules and Guidance document which may change annually and are linked to an academic year and not a financial year
- However, the objective is to set review dates at CYPLT for all charges so that all decisions are appropriately approved. As far as possible, we will endeavour to make few changes throughout the year in order to streamline this process.
- To recognise the and consider the overall financial position for the service – given the constraints that can apply to the deployment of any surpluses generated in the service area.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 That the fee for Community Learning be increased **from £4.00** (last updated 2014/15) per hour to **£4.50 per hour** (2010/21).
- 10.2 That the Community Learning learner fee policy statement for 2020/21 be approved for publication.

STUART CARLTON
CORPORATE DIRECTOR – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

Report prepared by Debbie Breatcliffe

North Yorkshire County Council

Adult Learning and Skills Service

Fees and Charges Policy 2020/21

This information is published and used in conjunction with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) document: ESFA funded adult education budget (AEB): funding rules 2020 to 2021 For the 2020 to 2021 funding year (1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021).

A summary of the levels of government contributions towards skills provision, excluding apprenticeships, see table below:

The level of ESFA contribution we will fund is as follows:

ESFA funded AEB supports 3 legal entitlements to full funding for eligible adult learners. These are set out in the Apprenticeships, Skills and Children's Learning Act 2009, and enable eligible learners to be fully funded for the following qualifications:

- English and maths, up to and including level 2, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have not previously attained a GCSE grade 4 (C), or higher, and/or
- first full qualification at level 2 for individuals aged 19 to 23, and/or
- first full qualification at level 3 for individuals aged 19 to 23

Government contribution table

The level of government contribution for ESFA funded AEB is as follows.

Provision	19-to-23-year-olds	24+ unemployed	24+ other
English and maths, up to and including level 2 (Must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement)	Fully funded*	Fully funded*	Fully funded*
Level e (excluding English and maths) (First full level 2 must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement)	Fully funded* (first and full)	Fully funded	Co-funded+
Learning to progress to level 2	Fully funded^ (up to and including level 1)	Fully funded	Co-funded+
Level 3 (First full level 3 must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement)	Fully funded* (first and full)	Loan-funded	Loan-funded
	Loan-funded** (previously achieved full level 3 or above)		
Traineeship#	Fully funded (including 16-to-24-year-olds###)	N/A	N/A
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learning up to and including level 2	Co-funded+	Fully funded	Co-funded+
	Fully funded – unemployed		
	Co-funded+	Fully funded	Co-funded+

Learning aims up to and including level 2, where the learner has already achieved a first full level 2, or above	Fully funded – unemployed		
Learning aims up to and including level 2, where the learner has not achieved a first full level 2, or above	N/A	Fully funded	Co-funded+
<p>*Must be delivered as one of the English and maths, and/or first full level 2 or first full level 3 qualifications required as part of the legal entitlements.</p> <p>^Must be delivered as entry or level one provision from local flexibility.</p> <p>#Excludes flexible element where funding depends on age and level.</p> <p>##16-to-18-year-old learners must be eligible under the ESFA's young people's residency requirements.</p> <p>**Availability of loans at level 3 does not replace the legal entitlement to full funding for learners aged 19 to 23 undertaking their first full level 3.</p> <p>+Low wage flexibility may apply</p>			

Learner eligibility – who is funded

To be funded on the first day of learning and learner must be:

- a. Aged 19 or over on 31st August 2020 within the 2020 to 2021 funding year if the learning aim is not an apprenticeship.
- b. An apprentice starting and apprenticeship after the last Friday in June of the academic year in which they have their 16th birthday.

All learners must be aged 19 or over on 31st August 2020 and must meet the residential eligibility criteria for funding. This is available from your local area Adult Learning and Skills Service (ALSS) office. The information below relates to qualifications which are approved for funding as defined by the Qualifications Information Guide.

Course fees are fee remitted and free to you if you are:

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) will meet the full cost of certain courses for learners that are in one of the following categories:

- receive Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), including those receiving National Insurance credits only
- receive Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- receive Universal Credit, and their take-home pay as recorded on their Universal Credit statement (disregarding benefits) is less than £338 a month (learner is sole adult in their benefit claim) or £541 a month (learner has a joint benefit claim with their partner)
- are released on temporary licence, studying outside a prison environment, and not funded by the Ministry of Justice

The ESFA may also fully fund learners who are employed, or self-employed, and would normally be co-funded for provision, up to and including level 2.

You **must** meet the following criteria:

- You are eligible for co-funding
- You earn less than £17,004.00 annual gross salary

Additionally, at the discretion of the Adult Learning and Skills Service, the Education and Skills Funding Agency will meet the full cost of certain courses for those learners whom are:

- receives other state benefits (not listed in paragraph 157) and their takehome pay (disregarding benefits) is less than £338 a month (learner is sole adult in their benefit claim) or £541 a month (learner has a joint benefit claim with their partner), and
- wants to be employed, or progress into more sustainable employment, and their take-home pay (disregarding benefits) is less than £338 a month (learner is sole adult in their benefit claim) or £541 a month (learner has a joint benefit claim with their partner), and you are satisfied identified learning is directly relevant to their employment prospects and the local labour market needs

Digital Skills Entitlement

As part of our wider digital skills offer from September 2020, we will support the Governments Digital Skills Framework which provides an entitlement to allow learners of all ages to thrive in the information and technological age. For adults with low digital skills, Essential Digital Skills Qualifications (EDSQ) aimed at both life and work will be funded through a legal entitlement (digital entitlement) which will bring ICT into line with maths and English by applying funding for these entry 3 and level 1 qualification.

Examination Costs

- Examination, membership and materials costs are in addition to the course fees, unless stipulated in the prospectus.
- Learners who are entitled to free accredited courses and who are fully funded do not pay examination, membership or materials costs.

GCSE English and maths

We will fully fund individuals, including individuals who are employed, aged 19 or older, who have not previously attained a GCSE grade 4 (C), or higher, in English and maths, as part of their legal entitlement on the day they start the following qualifications:

- GCSE English language or maths
- Functional Skills English or maths from Entry to level 2
- Stepping-stone qualifications (including components, where applicable) in English or maths approved by the Department for Education and ESFA
- If a learner wants to 'retake' their GCSE English and maths qualification because they did not achieve a grade 4 (C), or higher, we will not fund the learner to only resit the exam.

Examination Re sits

Learners who have studied GCSE with ALSS and wish to re-sit their GCSE English or maths examination in November without any further learning will have to pay the appropriate costs, which are the full exam, registration and certification fee plus a £35 administration charge.

For all other qualification types (with the exception of Functional maths and English) where there is an examination fee any re takes are to be paid for by the learners plus a £15 administration charge.

*Please also refer to Absence information on Page 6

19+ Advanced Learning Loans

From 1 August 2019, anyone who is 19 or over and wishes to study for a qualification at level 3 to level 6, will be able to apply for an Advanced Learning Loan to cover tuition fees.

Applications can take time to process please ensure you are in receipt of the loan prior to the start date of the course.

Student Loans Company are responsible for assessing eligibility and administering the loan. Further information on the application process is available from your local area Adult learning and Skills Service office or go to www.gov.uk/advanced-learning-loans.

Apprenticeships

The Adult Learning and Skills Service offers apprenticeship opportunities for learners aged 16 and over. For further details, contact your local area Adult Learning and Skills Service office.

Community Learning

If you are **unemployed and actively seeking work and in receipt of one of the benefits mentioned previously** the cost of a course is **£1.80 per hour (plus the costs of any resources if required)**

If you are **not in employment and not in receipt one of the benefits** mentioned previously and your income is below **£17,004.00 annual gross salary**, the cost of the course is **£1.80 per hour**

If you are **in employment and earning over £17,004.00 or not seeking work** the cost of a course is **£4.50**

These courses are offered to enable you to develop or maintain your skills in a range of subjects. These courses are only partially subsidised by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and therefore incur a cost which is priced individually and available as publicised or on request.

In addition to course fees, The Adult Learning and Skills Service will determine measures to increase the value of funding received for community learning. This is in line with the Pound Plus concept. Indicators and measures are outlined in the Community Learning Strategy.

Ways to Wellbeing courses

Some courses are offered to help individuals and community groups develop confidence, skills, improve health and wellbeing, reduce social and/or rural isolation or to move into employment, these are **free** for those identified learners. For example, these may be a patient referred by a GP or health professional to support in making lifestyle changes or someone suffering poor mental health due to being isolated.

Family Learning

Family Learning classes are run in many schools in the UK. They give parents and children the opportunity to find out how things are taught in their children's school as well as a chance to share ideas with other parents and develop their own skills.

Family Learning can benefit the parents and carers who attend the programmes as it is a powerful resource which enables people to take their first steps back into education. It's a valuable progression pathway to higher level skills and jobs.

These courses are offered to parents and carers to support their children's learning and are free.

Payment by instalment

Our payment by instalment method is to help you spread the cost of fees and are available on all courses with tuition fees **greater than £100**.

The first payment is 30% of the tuition fee plus the cost of materials, examination and registration fees. The remaining amount due will be split over a maximum of six consecutive monthly payments, or for courses of a shorter duration at least one week before the expected end date of the course. The exam and registration fees are an additional cost to the course fees – these must be paid at the time of enrolment with the first instalment.

For example, if the course is for 10 months and the tuition fee is £700 and the other associated costs are £40, the instalment fee will be £210 + £40 initial payment, then a monthly payment of £81.66 over six months. If a learner wants to pay it off earlier, that can be adjusted at enrolment.

The first instalment must be paid prior to the course commencing. The six remaining payments must be paid over the next six consecutive months. The final payment must be made before the end of the course.

Learners cannot attend the course until the first payment has been received, including any of the additional costs are paid in full.

If learners leave the course early or do not complete they will still be required to pay the fees in full and must be made aware of this at the time of enrolment.

Signing the enrolment form is the contract to confirm acceptance of the payment plan.

Learners cannot pay for classes on a weekly basis. If the learner joins a class late they will still pay the full course fee.

For some of the courses there will be specialist resources required with the costs being paid directly to the teacher.

Refunds

A full refund of course fees paid will only be made if the Service is unable to provide the course.

Pro Rata refund of fees may be claimed for: (a) temporary cancellation of classes for more than two meetings, where the revised arrangements for future meetings are not satisfactory to the student (b) permanent withdrawal from a course by a learner due solely to a long-term newly

diagnosed medical condition which prevents attendance on the course (c) extenuating personal circumstance at the discretion of the Area Manager.

Other refund requests will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.
All requests for refunds should be put in writing to the Area Manager.

Examination entry fees are non-refundable once paid to the awarding organisation unless that organisation offers a refund and the Service has received the refund.

Refunds for original payments made by credit/debit card must be refunded onto the original card. As card details are not stored, the cardholder will be required to present the card or card details again before the refund can be processed.

When a class has to be closed due to bad weather every effort will be made to ensure that an additional class is provided in lieu as follows:

- An extra session may be added on to the end of the course
- An extra half hour may be added onto the remaining weeks of the course, up to the number of hours missed – e.g. for a 2 hour course an extra half hour could be added to the last 4 sessions.

Refunds for other reasons are not generally given, but if a refund is granted **there will be an administration charge of £15.00.**

Absence

The Adult Learning and Skills Service will automatically withdraw a learner from a course because of non-attendance or non-participation of any element of their agreed learning plan after two consecutive weeks of absence from planned sessions of their course. If a learner knows of a reason why they are going to be absent for more than two weeks, they must send information to their teacher explaining why they are going to be absent, and the timeframe of this absence. The Adult Learning and Skills Service reserves the right to withdraw the learner after a two weeks' absence if we are not satisfied that the learner is going to genuinely return to their programme of learning and to invoice for any outstanding fees.

*Please refer to Learner Attendance and Absence Policy

Learners who fail to attend the exam without notice may be charged for subsequent exams or refused entry onto other courses.

Discretionary Learning Support Fund

Additional support and access to funds may also be available if you cannot meet the cost of your course. Funding is limited and we cannot guarantee its availability, but if awarded can be put towards your course fee, travel, books or childcare. Funding must be applied for before you start the course, to apply you will need to have an interview with a Learning Guidance Support Officer who will provide you with further information and help you to complete an application form. This funding is only available to those wishes to attend an accredited course.

Additional Learner Support

Adult Learning and Skills Service offers a range of support for learners including Dyslexia assessment which is one element of the support.

Some learners in the Adult Learning and Skills Service are eligible for a free Dyslexia assessment. Others may be asked to make a financial contribution, according to their ability to pay.

Other types of support are available and will be discussed with your course teacher or Learning Guidance and Support Officer.

Non-eligible learners

The Adult Learning and Skills Service does not ordinarily enrol learners onto **any** course where they do not meet the Education and Skills Funding Agency eligibility criteria, however a request can be made through the Area Manager and if suitable a fee will be applied based on individual circumstances and the course applied for. If approved this will have a fee based on the full cost of the provision with no option for an instalment plan.

Residents of some postcodes which are part of a Devolved Authority area are not eligible for funded programmes in the North Yorkshire County, please seek the advice of the Adult Learning and Skills Service to discuss.

You can check your post code by using the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-education-budget-aeb-postcode-files>

Bespoke training for employers or at the request of external organisations

The Adult Learning and Skills Service can offer bespoke training to meet the needs of Employers or external organisations, these can be discussed on an individual basis and will be costed by applying the formulas in the Full Cost Calculator.

The Adult Learning and Skills Service reserves the right to amend a course fee, even if it has been advertised previously. This right will be exercised if an error has been made, or if there are changes to funding rules, the type of provision, minimum numbers or costs.

All learners are informed at enrolment and through the prospectus that their learning is part funded by the European Social Fund in line with the Education Skills Funding Agency co-financing arrangement.

Subcontractor Fees and Charges Policy 2020/21

Sub-Contracting Declaration

The Adult Learning and Skills Service receives a separate funding grant to deliver High Needs Study Programmes (HNSP) to young people who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) to support the local offer.

The HNSP is individual to the young person and as such, there may be a number of bespoke requests. This would make it unrealistic for the Service to offer all of the provision in-house. It is likely to be cost ineffective in terms of the cost of acquiring all the necessary equipment and facilities to meet the needs of the individuals.

The High Needs Study Programme is provided in-house by the Adult Learning and Skills Service. However, the Approved Provider List (APL) relates to more specific specialist aspects of the High Needs Delivery (HND) which ALSS cannot meet internally. For example, provision of equine management or farming skills, work experience.

In line with North Yorkshire County Council procurement rules our subcontracting is undertaken through the YOR-Tender and NYCC procurement rules and procedures which ensures a robust due diligence procedure and ensures compliance with the ESFA subcontracting rules and guidelines. The subcontracting arrangements are also published on the Gov.uk website.

Payments are made to each subcontractor in accordance with NYCC financial procedures and the service level agreement and contract.

Currently we subcontract with the following organisations and we passport our funding to them and report to the ESFA on activity, we hold back a £800 per learner as a management fee (pro rata) to cover the supervision of the subcontracting which includes quality assurance processes for example including observation of teaching and learning, delivery of CPD activities and other bespoke support to the organisation to ensure the highest quality of learning delivery is made available, demonstrating value for money and a positive impact on learner lives.

Organisation Name	UKPRN
Blueberry Academy	10020954
Northdale Agriculture	10084868
Disability Action Yorkshire	10026987
Veloheads	10084889