

North Yorkshire Council
Children & Young Peoples Services
Executive Members

12th May 2026

Adult Learning and Skills Service Fees and Charging Policy 2026-2027

Report of the Corporate Director El Mayhew

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to introduce the revised Adult Learning and Skills Service (ALSS) Fees and Charging Policy for the academic year 2026 - 2027. Reviewing this policy will also require approval to increase charges for those learners who are eligible to pay fees.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Adult Learning and Skills Engagement strategy details a changing curriculum offer that is designed to meet a number of competing challenges and priorities. Funding for this provision is largely provided by the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority and as such is bound by clear funding rules that are published on an annual basis and that reflect key priorities for adult education. These rules make clear stipulations on the types of programmes and types of learners that can receive full or partial funding.
- 2.2 Funding for learners within the Personalised Learning College (PLC) is received from the Department for Education (formally ESFA) who also stipulate that we must publish a policy and declare assurance on any elements of our funding that are subcontracted to other providers.
- 2.2 This report details the key changes to the existing policy led by changes to the funding rules and recognises increasing inflationary pressures on the service. Due to these increasing pressures, for the small number of learners who are required to pay fees, we are proposing a competitive increase in fee amounts of 4%.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In line with the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority - Adult Skills Fund. Funding & Performance Management Rules for the 2026 to 2027 funding year (1 August 2026 to 31 July 2027) we must produce a fees policy and publish this on our website.
- 3.2 The Department for Education (DfE) in their annual Adult Skills Fund Funding & Performance Management Rules 2026-27 and the York and North Yorkshire Funding Rules also stipulate that we must produce a clear updated policy and publish this on our web site, for aspects of our funding received through this route.
- 3.2 To address the requirement to set out a clear Fee and Charging Policy and that all fees and charges are reviewed on an annual basis we have reviewed and updated the policy (Appendix 1)

- 3.3 The allocation amount is determined and calculated annually and is expected to be published in May, preceding the start of the new academic year (1st August to 31st July)
- 3.4 The funding comes into the Authority directly from the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority; the Adult Skills Fund (ASF) is to support learners ages 19+. The Advanced Learning Loan funding is to support learners aged 24+ and Apprenticeship funds come through levy employers and supports Apprentices aged 16+.
- 3.5 The ASF is funded and calculated:
- Adult Skills core (Accredited Learning) is calculated through a formula funding methodology and is allocated to fund accredited learning, initial indicative statements from the MCA suggest this be £777,293.00. Fees charged for accredited courses are dependent on the learner's personal circumstances and costs are prescribed by the awarding bodies
 - Tailored Learning (Non accredited learning) which is nonformula 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. The indicative statement is £1,914,781.75.
 - Free Course for Jobs (FCFJ) is a targeted level 3 offer to support adults who meet the definition of being below the earning threshold. The level 3 qualifications which will support the development of new skills for adult learners and improve the prospects of eligible adults in the labour market. Our indicative allocation is £105,889.19
 - Advanced learner loan allocation for 2026/2027 is £18,285.00 which is for learners to apply for who are not eligible for FCFJ.
- 3.6 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 service can determine the percentage that learners are expected to pay of the remaining 50%. The fees are set by the funding rates and there is no scope for local fee decisions.
- 3.7 In line with Government priorities, ASF 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.
- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 The primary purpose of tailored learning is to support learners into employment and to progress to further learning, in line with the overall purpose of the ASF. It is recognised that Tailored learning also supports wider outcomes including:
- Improvement in health and wellbeing,
 - equipping parents/carers to support their child's learning

- developing stronger communities.

Tailored Learning should encourage and support all learners to progress on to new or more stretching provision to help them into more formal learning or employment.

3.10 Tailored learning courses are delivered and reported under the following 7 purpose types which link to the Tailored Learning objectives below:

1. Engaging and/or building confidence
2. Preparation for further learning
3. Preparation for employment
4. Improving essential skills (English, including English for Speakers of Other Languages, maths and digital provision)
5. Equipping parents/carers to support children's learning
6. Health and well-being
7. Developing stronger communities

4.0 Core issue

4.1 Our proposed offer is costed at £6.40 per hour (£6.15 25/26) for full fee-paying learner and £2.70 (£2.60 25/26) for fee remitted learner, this will be applied through the same funding entitlement and fee remission rules as Accredited Learning.

4.2 When we work in partnership with organisations and offer learning for free, we sometimes have learners who would ordinarily be unfunded due to their postcode area (devolved) in such instances, and only in this instance we propose a charge of £9.05 per hour. (£8.70 25/26) This will enable them to participate with their peers. All other groups of unfunded learners are excluded.

4.3 The context for this review reflects the Council fees and Charges policy that states:

- All fees and charges are to be reviewed on an annual basis. Whilst it is acknowledged that a full review of each fee and charge implemented by the Council is not practicable each financial year, it is considered that as a minimum the fees and charges already charged by the Council are to be adjusted in line with inflation each year. This will ensure that any inflationary change to the costs of providing a service will be matched by a corresponding change to the charge made for the service. The inflation rate to be applied each year will be notified by the Corporate Director of Resources as part of the budget setting process. All fees and charges must be subject to a detailed review at least every 3 years.

4.4 The Finance team have provided information on the scale of inflation applicable to the service and their estimate is that the composite rate of inflation between 25-26 and 26-27 around 4.0%. It is proposed to increase the fee for Tailored Learning from £6.15 per hour in 2025 to £6.40 per hour, this is based on 4%. This larger increase is proposed to reflect that there has been no increase in the grant allocation for a number of years. The impact of this rise is expected to be minimal, in 25/26 the income from tailored learning was £0 with only 0 learners paying course fees.

4.5 Whilst this income figure is low, the removal of additional short-term grant funding may add strain to the adult learning budget, seeking to raise income through fee paying courses is one of a number of areas for consideration and we feel this increase lays a platform for this exploration.

5.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN AND RESPONSES

5.1 Some recent 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.

5.2

Organisation	Fee Information (data 4 th April 25)
City of York Learning (ESFA Funding)	<p>Varied price per course – examples below 10 week watercolour course £170 - £17 per session 10 weeks drawing and painting £170 - £17 per session Photograph workshop 1 off session £32 10 weeks stained glass - £170 - £17 per session</p> <p>York Learning operate a model that utilises a large proportion of fee paying courses with fee remitted learners receiving discounted access to provision through Tailored Learning</p>
The WEA (ESFA Funding)	Craft Art for Well-being £8.53 per hour – 9-week course 2.5 hours per week = £192.00
Stockton Council Adult Learning	<p>Some free courses for all, Mixed Media Arts for Beginners – 8 weeks face to face, Exploring Lino Printing 8-week course, Introduction to decoupage – 1day. Not many are chargeable and they have a high wage threshold of £33,210.00</p> <p>Stockton Learning and Skills Service Adult Learning Courses Spring and Summer 2026</p>
Rossett School in Harrogate (Privately funded)	<p>Life drawing 5 hours - £60 (£12 per hour) Costal craft 5 hours - £45 (£9 per hour) Writers group 10 weeks 2 hours – £120 (£6 per hour)</p> <p>All learners are required to pay – doesn't seem to be a structure to how they charge</p>
Darlington learning and skills	Courses are free of charge to residents – only a small curriculum offer at basic level
Rutland Council	Courses are charged at £6.50 per hour
Nelson and Colne College Group	Most courses are free to Lancashire Residents
Buckinghamshire	<p>Workshop days £40.00 (£13.34 per hour) Stained glass £11.60 per hour</p>
Durham Learn	Community Learning is free to all – wage threshold for ASF £30,000.

6.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

6.1 Adult Learning can provide support for all aspects of the council's key themes, to do so requires effective and efficient use of the resources available. The service strategy details

how we are to do this, but an effective fees and charges policies and levels offers us an opportunity to raise income to ensure that suitable funds are available.

7.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 We have considered the impact of no-change and also increasing fees further. As fee contributions currently have minimal impact on service income, the potential for negative publicity of a larger increase has contributed to the decision to position at this level.

8.0 IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS

8.1 The service works closely with Learning and Development to support the development of North Yorkshire Council staff this is delivered through the learner entitlement, so no charge is applied.

9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The service has achieved a balanced budget through prudent working over the last three years. Due to the minimal income levels associated with fees charged it is not considered a financial risk to this aim to raise costs.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Failure to publish a fees and charges policy would be a breach of contract with the Combined Authority and the DFE

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Fees and charges are only levied on those individuals who exceed the financial income thresholds stated in the guidance. Whilst there may be an impact on individuals around this threshold point the level of fees charged should not indicate a significant financial disadvantage. Those learners who require support to purchase equipment, care for children while studying, have IT access or travel to learn issues have the opportunity to apply for a discretionary bursary.

12.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The policy has no climate change implications as fees and charges do not dictate service operation

13.0 PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There no implications linked to service performance as this relates purely to management of service income in line with external funding arrangements. There is potential to have a minimal impact on learner recruitment but as the vast majority of learners are not required to pay fees this is likely only impacted by negative publicity.

14.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 Although a contractual requirement to produce a new policy the only change to previous year versions is the necessary increase in fees and the widening of definitions of tailored learning within it, in line with national policy change.

15.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15.1 For the service to continue to meet obligations to York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority and the Department for Education we must publish an annual fees policy.
- 15.2 In line with the wider council charges policy we must uplift charges in-line with inflation and seek a moderately larger increase to reflect static funding levels.

16.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- i) To approve the increase in fees charged to learners who are eligible
- ii) To approve publication of the fees and charging and associated pound-plus policies

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Draft Adult Learning and Skills Service Fees and Charging Policy 2026-2027
Appendix B – York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority – Adult Skills Grant Allocation Statement 2026 to 2027
Appendix C – Advanced learner loan funding 2026 to 2027
Appendix D – Full Cost Calculator
Appendix E – Equality Impact Assessment
Appendix F – Climate Impact Assessment

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

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Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

PLEASE ALSO NOTE THAT IF ANY REPORTS / APPENDICES INCLUDE SIGNATURES THESE MUST BE REMOVED / DELETED PRIOR TO SENDING REPORTS / APPENDICES TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES. Appendices should include an Equality Impact Assessment and a Climate Impact Assessment where appropriate

